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Roadside bombs wound civilian in south Lebanon

NABATIYEH (R) — A civilian was slightly wounded by roadside bombs which exploded near the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh on Saturday, security sources said. A farmer was slightly injured by four bombs which exploded simultaneously and were spread a few metres apart near a Lebanese army barracks. The sources accused Israeli troops of planting the explosives. Roadside bombs are a popular instrument of death in south Lebanon, where Israeli troops and their client militia allies of the South Lebanon Army are locked in battles with Hizbollah guerrillas. In Beirut, a Hizbollah spokesman said he had no immediate information on the explosion.

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Iraq continues to bar American weapons inspectors amidst threats of military action, more sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq blocked American members of U.N. arms inspection teams for the sixth straight day on Saturday as a senior Iraqi official prepared to leave for talks with the Security Council in New York over the standoff.



Iraqi children wave portraits of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein while shouting anti-American slogans during a demonstration in Baghdad Saturday. A senior Iraqi official prepared to leave for talks with the U.N. Security Council in New York over the stand-off (Reuters photo)

The U.N. inspection team which consists of two groups halted its work after the concerned Iraqi authorities in two sites told them the Americans were not allowed to take part, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted a source at the Iraqi monitoring directorate as saying.

Iraqi newspapers reported that President Saddam Hussein chaired a meeting of the Iraqi leadership on Friday night during which Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz was "given the required instructions" before flying to New York for talks next week.

A U.N. mission left Baghdad on Friday without a public promise that Americans could resume work on the U.N. teams, part of a long-standing programme to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Aziz said on Friday he would go to New York to continue the "constructive dialogue" with the U.N. Security Council. The date of his departure is not known.

The apparent failure of the U.N. mission angered the United States, which talked tough.

U.S. officials showed growing impatience and dismay with the Iraqi government. They said they would wait to hear the U.N. mission's report on Monday but did not speculate what measures they might take against Baghdad.

"Our sense is that the mission of the U.N. envoys did not achieve the desired result... this is a disturbing, most disturbing development," State Department spokesman James Rubin told

reporters at his daily briefing. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said she expected the Security Council would take "firm action" and President Bill Clinton, speaking earlier, said he saw no reason for hope in the confrontation with Iraq. He refused to rule out any options for dealing with Baghdad.

"The international community must decide what to do. I think it is important that we be resolute and I think it would be a mistake to rule in or out any particular course of action at this time," Mr. Clinton told reporters.

But late on Friday, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen urged a cease-fire in the war of words.

"I think first we have to lower the rhetoric that has surfaced in the last few days. There's an expression that anger blows out the lamp of the mind," he told CNN.

Mr. Cohen said it was important to focus on unity at

the U.N. and among Washington's allies, something that President Saddam "desperately" wanted to destroy.

U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) Chairman Richard Butler told a news conference in New York on Friday that on Monday U.S. U-2 planes would resume overflights of Iraq on behalf of the U.N., despite an Iraqi threat to shoot them down.

Iraq announced the ban on American inspectors on Oct. 29 on the grounds they were trying to pressure UNSCOM not to give Iraq a clean bill of health and prolong the sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Mr. Butler also said he was sending his inspectors into the field again on Saturday but might not continue facing the daily blockages after that.

He also announced a new breach of the U.N. weapons monitoring system in Iraq, saying his inspectors have been prevented changing cassettes in chemical air sam-

plers used to detect any banned chemical warfare activity.

U.S. officials have so far emphasised the first action must come from the Security Council — unless Iraq first shoots down one of the U.S. Air Force U-2s.

U.S. media quoted an unnamed Pentagon official as saying an attack on the planes would be an "act of war" but White House spokesman Mike McCurry declined to use the phrase.

The U.S. and Britain would like the council to declare Iraq in "material breach" of a 1991 resolution which resulted in a cease-fire in the Gulf war and which imposed stringent disarmament conditions, diplomats said.

Such a declaration in the past has paved the way for military force against Iraq, on grounds that the cease-fire terms have been violated. But obtaining Russian or French support for such a move now would prove difficult.

Brotherhood willing to accept seats in Upper House despite election boycott

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Muslim Brotherhood does not regret boycotting the Parliamentary elections but showed little hesitance in taking part in the King-appointed Senate.

Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdul Majid Thuneibat, cast doubt, in an interview with Al Arab Al Yom daily, on the overall elections procedures and tacitly accused the government of encouraging widespread vote fraud in last week's parliamentary elections.

"The Interior Ministry's obvious disregard to voting card duplication indicates that it wants to make use of it to raise the percentage of registration and prove that the opposition boycott of elections had failed," Mr. Thuneibat added, "these matters and others were not carried out in good faith."

The Brotherhood leader insisted that the Islamists took the right move when they boycotted the elections especially because the Lower House could not have an effective role under the "one-person, one-vote" electoral system and the domination of the executive authority over the legis-

lative authority.

"We intended to expose the government and show the people that its policies, such as legislation related to the peace treaty and the International Monetary Fund's policies it intends to pass through the Parliament, will receive no popular back-up," he said.

But Mr. Thuneibat insisted that the Upper House (Senate) is a different matter for the Brotherhood. In a page-long interview, Mr. Thuneibat did not rule out potential participation in the Senate since the reasons behind the boycott of the parliamentary elections were different.

"Senators are government employees. The government might appoint one of the Brotherhood members as an ambassador. Can we refuse such an appointment?" he asked.

The Islamists leader believes that the recently elected Lower House will be dissolved soon.

"I don't think that the present House will finish its four-year term... if a new modern electoral system, that meets our expectations to a certain extent is introduced then we will call for

new elections and the dissolution of Parliament."

Only two Brotherhood deputies, Abdullah Akaileh and Mohammad Azaideh, made it in the four-year term Parliament. Both deputies, in addition to six other former Brotherhood members [who contested the elections but did not fare well] were dismissed from the movement for having violated its leadership's call for boycott.

Although Mr. Thuneibat admitted that both Dr. Akaileh and Mr. Azaideh "remain the only two true Islamists" in Parliament, the Brotherhood will not consider re-admitting them into the movement.

The powerful Muslim Brotherhood movement is contemplating ways to participate in political action in Jordan following this week's advent of a centrist Parliament void of Islamist influence.

The Brotherhood, the largest opposition bloc in the Kingdom, said it will launch in the next few weeks a plan of action for political reform to compensate for its absence from the 80-member Lower House.

The Islamists, independent opposition personalities, nine opposition parties and professional unions have formed what is now called the "pro-boycott" group that has agreed on a "National Reform Plan to save the nation and to defend democracy." The group, in clear defiance of the government's efforts to enhance the credibility of the elected Parliament, said it will launch the programme of a national conference that will define a plan of action "to solve the political crisis the country is passing through."

"The unfairness of these elections was clear from the violations and troubles which accompanied the process," said the group.

The group said in a statement it had reviewed the results of the elections and "affirms the success of the boycott decision and the widespread popular response which it won, despite the lack of a general call or mobilisation for [the boycott]." The statement was signed by Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Jamil Abu Bakr,

Committee for Gulf war illness probe named

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton on Saturday announced that an independent panel would oversee the Pentagon's probe into Gulf War illness, which has been sharply criticised by veterans and lawmakers.

Mr. Clinton also promised \$13.2 million for new research into the effects of low-level exposure to chemical agents and other possible causes for the ailments.

The president rejected a congressional recommendation to let independent scientists research the still-elusive cause of the ailments but opted to name former senator Warren Rudman to head a committee to monitor the Pentagon's investigation.

"To make sure our veterans and the public know all the facts and have full confidence in the [Defence Department's] fact finders..." Mr. Clinton said in a statement Saturday.

Top level EU delegation for peace in Amman Tuesday

AMMAN (J.T.) — A top level delegation representing the Presidency of the European Union (EU) is expected to visit Jordan next Tuesday as part of a tour in the region this week aimed at enhancing peace efforts.

The delegation, which comprises Jacques Poos, Luxembourgian minister of foreign affairs and the council's president, as well as vice president of the European Commission Manuel Martin and Ambassador Miguel Angel Moratinos, EU special envoy for Middle Eastern affairs, will arrive in the region Nov. 11.

According to Victor Weitzel, Luxembourg's foreign affairs spokesperson, the delegation expects to contribute to the finalisation of an accord of "good behaviour" between Israel and the Palestinian Nation-

al Authority, to establish confidence-building measures such as the opening of the Gaza Strip airport, the construction of the Gaza port as well as the free passage of Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank.

"The presidency will also contribute to the relaunching of negotiations between Syria and Israel as well as between Lebanon and Israel," said Mr. Weitzel in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times.

The tour, which includes Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the Gaza Strip, Syria and Lebanon, will also focus on economic exchange with countries in the region. "We want to reaffirm our commitment to peace," he added. "But the tour will also have economic dimensions."

Spokesman Weitzel said that the European delega-

tion is keen on promoting economic cooperation with countries in the region especially vis-a-vis the Euro-Med partnership agreements.

He said that while there were "some difficulties" with Cairo, the delegation attaches paramount importance to the Euro-Med partnership agreements and is expected to hold separate talks on the issue with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

"Luxembourg is the major financial donor in the region and we hope to contribute effectively to the peace efforts," he said.

The delegation will be meeting with Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh and is expected to confer with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who had been on a visit to Luxembourg recently.

Talks with Israel in U.S. achieved nothing — Arafat

Palestinian boy hospitalised after confrontation with Israeli soldiers

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat said on Saturday talks with Israel in the United States had achieved nothing and he blamed the Jewish state for the lack of progress.

"As we had expected nothing has been achieved from there because it was clear and obvious that the Israeli side did not intend to achieve or to push the peace process forward," President Arafat told reporters in Gaza upon his return from Egypt.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators spent four days near Washington this week discussing "interim issues" left unfulfilled from previous peace

home "very satisfied." But Palestinian National Authority officials complained of "major gaps" still existing.

Israeli-Palestinian talks have been deadlocked for eight months over the Jewish state's refusal to halt settlement building in occupied territories and over Islamist bombings.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said after meeting the Palestinian leader earlier on Saturday even minor issues had not been resolved.

"President Arafat clearly expressed his appreciation of the American role... but their efforts are being blocked by Israel's negativity," said Mr. Musa.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will meet separately with President Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Europe next week in further U.S. mediation efforts.

U.S. officials say Ms. Albright wants to raise with the two leaders con-

tentious issues left unresolved by the talks near Washington. Meanwhile, clashes erupted Friday between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators near the site of a Jewish settlement in the autonomous West Bank town of Hebron, Palestinian security officials said.

Several dozen young Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers guarding a roadblock in Sbudada (Martyrs) Street which runs beside the Jewish enclave inhabited by around 400 settlers. The sources said the violence started after soldiers hit two young Palestinians.

One of the boys, Ala'a Mahmoud Bayed, was admitted to hospital with minor injuries, the sources said.

Palestinian police dispersed the demonstration, the sources said.

The Israeli army confirmed that incidents had opposed demonstrators and soldiers.

Egypt recalls ambassador to Qatar for consultation

DOHA (R) — Egypt has recalled its ambassador to Qatar for consultations, just over a week before a controversial economic conference in Doha which Israel will attend, an Egyptian embassy official said on Saturday.

"[Ambassador] Mohammed Minessey" was summoned to Cairo for discussions on Qatari Egyptian relations, including the MENA conference," the official said.

Mr. Minessey left on Friday, the official said, adding that no date had been set for his return. There was no immediate official comment from Qatar on the move.

Egypt has linked its participation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference, due to take place from Nov. 16-18, to progress in talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Tension between the two Arab states has risen in recent months over issues including the conference. In July, Qatar stopped issuing visas to Egyptian nationals, saying it was trying to prevent a preponderance of any group of foreign citizens.

China publicly breaks ranks on Libya sanctions

'China is not in favour of sanctions against Libya, as they bring suffering to innocent people in that country'

Combined agency dispatches

CHINA ON Friday publicly broke ranks with its Security Council colleagues and called for the early lifting of five-year old sanctions against Libya.

The Chinese ambassador publicly contradicted U.S. envoy Bill Richardson who told reporters that "not one country" had spoken in favour of lifting the sanctions.

The exchange followed closed-door consultations by the U.N. Security Council which decided to maintain the air and arms embargo adopted to press Libya to hand over two Libyan suspects wanted in connection with the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

Libya is refusing to hand over to Britain or the U.S. the suspects wanted in connection with the 1988

bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland which killed 270 people.

The Chinese president of the Security Council, Ambassador Qin Huasun, said after the closed-door session that "no consensus was reached on a modification of the sanctions measures."

However, speaking as Chinese permanent representative, he added that "China is not in favour of sanctions against Libya, as they bring suffering to the innocent people in that country. China hopes that sanctions will be lifted early."

He also noted that the Arab League and Organisation of African Unity backed Libya's proposal for the pair to be tried in a third country, and hoped "that the parties concerned would likewise adopt a

flexible approach."

Britain and the U.S. have rejected that proposal, but London is inviting U.N. observers to Scotland to monitor the impartiality of Scottish law.

Mr. Richardson, asked about Mr. Qin's statement, replied: "I'll let him speak for himself."

The exchange highlighted the difficulties for Britain and the U.S. within the 15-member council in maintaining the sanctions on Libya.

Libya said on Saturday the United States was behind "unjust" U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed on Tripoli over the Lockerbie affair and vowed not to succumb to pressure. The Security Council on Friday retained sanctions imposed on Libya since 1992 for failing to hand over for trial two suspects in the 1988 mid-air bomb-

ing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie.

"Within the framework of its total domination over the so-called Security Council to transform it into an American Security Council, America has renewed, through this council, the unjust measures imposed on the great Jamahiriyyah," Libya's news agency, JANA, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said in a commentary.

JANA said this was "evidence that the resolution to renew the unjust measures on the great Jamahiriyyah is an American resolution and not a resolution of the council, not even a resolution of the 15 members of this council."

"We would like to reaffirm that if America can impose on us these unjust measures, it cannot impose surrender on us," it added.

' Hamas leader worried over clash with PNA'

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Hamas spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, has said his movement had a "hard choice" whether to continue its jihad (holy war) against Israel and risk confrontation with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), another Islamist faction said Saturday.

"We face a hard choice, either we stop our jihad or we enter into a conflict with the Palestinian [National] Authority," Sheikh Yassin said in a conversation with officials from the Islamic Jihad in his Gaza City home on Friday.

Islamic Jihad, a minor Islamist group with close links to the PNA, reported Sheikh Yassin's comments in a statement received by Agence France Presse on Saturday.

"Jihad must continue because it is our duty to defend ourselves as long as the [Israeli] occupation continues," he said.

But "we do not want to enter in a confrontation with the authority. No matter how much the authority persecutes us, our sole enemy remains Israel. There must not be Palestinian bloodshed and we must preserve unity," he said.

Sheikh Yassin also warned that Hamas "has the ability to disturb Israel's security so that settlers and investors and tourists flee our raped lands."

"We have the faith and we are prepared to die for our cause," he said.

In September, Palestinian Preventive Security forces launched a crackdown against Hamas, arresting 80 of its members and closing 16 of its institutions after the group conducted a pair of Jerusalem bombings in the summer.

Israel has insisted that the PNA step up the fight to uproot Hamas from self-rule areas before it will move forward in the peace process.

Scalfaro tours downtown Beirut; meets opposition leaders

BEIRUT (AP) — Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro toured war-damaged downtown Beirut on Saturday and met Lebanese opposition leaders as he wound up a four-day state visit.

President Scalfaro viewed a model of the huge reconstruction project in the heart of the Lebanese capital, then drove through downtown areas where work is under way.

The Italian president visited the Maronite Patriarchate north of Beirut and later met

Islamist politicians and Lebanese Christian opposition leaders.

Mr. Scalfaro was scheduled to depart to Rome later Saturday. Italy, Lebanon's biggest foreign trade partner, has contributed more than \$300 million to this country's multibillion dollar reconstruction drive.

During this year and next, Italy is expected to give Lebanon \$110 in credits, soft loans and grants, according to Italian diplomats.

In his talks with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi on Thursday, President Scalfaro offered Italian help to bring peace to southern Lebanon, but he did not specify the kind of help his country was considering.

Israel established a 15-kilometre deep self-declared "security" zone in south Lebanon in 1985, the claimed aim of which is the protection of northern settlements from cross-border guerrilla attacks.

Israeli troops and an allied Lebanese Christian militia frequently clash in the south with Hizbollah guerrillas.

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Algerian bomb kills four children

PARIS (R) — Four children were killed when a bomb exploded at an abandoned house in western Algeria earlier this week, a national newspaper reported on Saturday.

Al Khabar daily also reported that another bomb in Algiers killed one person and wounded three while suspected Islamists slaughtered five civilians southwest of the capital.

The paper said the four children died on Thursday when a booby-trapped house blew up in Sidi Lakhdar area in Tlemcen, some 400 kilometres west of Algiers.

A second bomb went off the same day in Algiers killed one and wounded three at a bus station in 'Ain Benian area, the newspaper said.

No one claimed responsibility for the bombings. Hundreds of civilians perished in bomb attacks in Algeria in the past five years. The authorities blamed

Islamists on the attacks. Gunmen, thought to be Islamists, cut the throats of five civilians also on Thursday in Sobha area in Chlef province, 150 km south west of Algiers, said Al Khabar.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO
14:10 Little Rosey
14:30 Joany Quest
14:50 The Magic School Bus
15:00 Energy Express
15:30 American Chart Show
16:30 Tarzan
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Fresh Prince of Belair
20:00 Cinema Cinema Cinema
20:30 Hot Shots
21:10 Renegade
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Bourne Identity
23:15 The Jewel in the Crown

PRAYER TIMES

04:35 Fair
05:54 (Sunrise) Duha
11:19 Dhuhur
14:19 'Asr
16:45 Maghreb
18:04 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Santa Church Tel. 622366.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah 820425
Dr. Wissam Hasyin 748563
Dr. Munther Qraini 779959
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem 620115
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah 820425
Dr. Wissam Hasyin 748563
Dr. Munther Qraini 779959
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem 620115
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
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Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:50 Lamaca (RJ)
08:25 Borubay (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:45 Madrid (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00 Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
17:45 Paris (RJ)
17:45 London (RJ)
18:05 Athens (RJ)
18:40 Frankfurt (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)
20:55 Vienna (RJ)

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10:30 Vienna (RJ)
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11:30 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)

OTHER FLIGHTS

Other Flights
03:25 Rome (AZ)
10:00 Sanaa (TY)
12:25 Bahrain (GF)
13:00 Moscow (SU)
15:00 Doha (QR)
17:45 Jeddah (SV)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-3, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

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ANTI-U.S. PROTEST: An Iraqi woman raises a picture of President Saddam Hussein while shouting anti-American slogans during a demonstration in Baghdad on Saturday. Anti-American demonstrations took place for the sixth straight day on Saturday and a senior Iraqi official prepared to leave for talks with the Security Council in New York over the standoff (Reuters photo)

Bahraini court starts trial in absentia of 8 opposition leaders

MANAMA (AFP) — The trial in absentia of eight Bahraini opposition leaders accused of seeking to overthrow the government opened here Saturday, an official source said.

The trial before the state security court was held in camera and without any legal representation for the defendants, the source added. It was adjourned until Nov. 15.

The state security court was set up in 1976. Cases are heard by three judges. There is no right of appeal against its judgements.

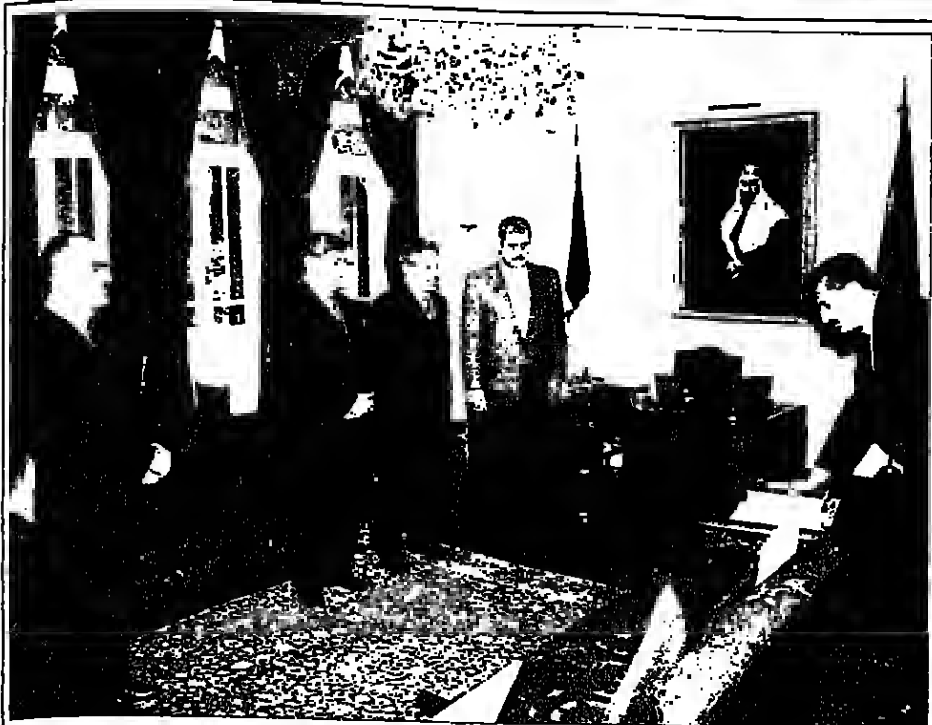
UAE slashes cost of major mosque project

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has slashed the costs of a project to build one of the biggest mosques in the world, the business weekly Emirates Today reported on Saturday.

The value of the contract, awarded to the joint Italian venture Impregilo Rizzani De Eccher, was cut from \$397.8 million to \$218 million, it said.

The cost-cutting was ordered by the executive council, Abu Dhabi's government, and it involves revision of some engineering and construction designs, the magazine quoted official sources as saying.

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NEW AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY SWORN IN: The newly-appointed Ambassador to Turkey, Musa Breizat, is sworn in before His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, at the Royal Court (Photo by Boghos)

Prince announces new centre to train therapists for disabled

KARAK (Petra) — HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the chief chamberlain, Saturday announced that Mu'ta University will create a faculty awarding the BA degree in special education for the handicapped in order to produce graduates to help provide rehabilitation services in southern Jordan.

The Prince made the statement during a visit to the university, where he, Mu'ta University President Eid Duhayat, and other concerned officials reviewed the progress on the establishment of a centre for the early detection and diagnosis of disabilities.

The centre is to open its doors early in 1998, according to Prince Ra'd. Mu'ta University will also donate a four-duum plot of land for the establishment of a multi-purpose hall for the benefit of the physically handicapped people in the southern regions, he said.

Prince Ra'd attended a ceremony in which 11 wheelchairs donated by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash company were distributed.

In a brief address, the Prince said there is need for more qualified cadres to care for and rehabilitate the handicapped and he urged the private sector to join hands with the Ministry of Social Development and Mu'ta University to promote handicapped services.

Prince Ra'd also visited Tafleeh city and inspected the local 120-bed hospital, which was opened in 1992.

Resource centre to conduct study on women's participation in elections

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre (PBWRC) has announced its intention to conduct a study on women in the 1997 parliamentary elections, to be completed by the end of the year, according to a press release Sunday.

The study will evaluate women's participation in the elections as voters and candidates. From this study, women's groups can derive guidelines for future strategies for the advancement of women, according to the announcement.

The study, which will be conducted at the national level, will analyse voting practices and identify reasons for the absence of female representation in the current Parliament, the statement continued.

PBWRC Director Farah Daghistani stated that "while we are disappointed by the prospect of Jordan entering the 21st century with no female representation in Parliament, we realise that increasing women's political participation is a long-term process."

"There is much to be learned from the last elections, and we must strive to formulate new approaches for programmes in the next four years. We hope that our study will be a useful base from which we can plan ahead," the press release concluded.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister to attend environment conference in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Khreishan is scheduled to leave today for Cairo, where he will take part in the meetings of the Arab ministers of environment.

Dermatology conference to begin here next week

AMMAN (Petra) — Under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the Second International Conference on Dermatology and Laser Surgery will begin here Nov. 17. The three-day conference will bring together specialists from the U.S., Greece, Italy, France,

Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan. More than 40 working papers will be submitted to the conference, which is being organised by the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

Minister calls for development of railway

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Bassam Saket Saturday visited the Hijaz Railway Corporation, where he inspected the maintenance sections and toured the corporation's various divisions. The minister called for developing the railway's performance and increasing its role in transportation.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Piano recital by Hassan Mufit, marking the centenary of Chopin's birthday, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weiddeb (Tel. 643251/2) at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Bani Hamida fall exhibition "Encounter" (displaying rugs designed by Japanese textile designer Tomoko Iyoda) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 25 (Tel. 658696/7).

* Exhibition of wicker accessories from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at the Jordan Rivers Designs showroom (Tel. 613081), until Nov. 23.

* Works by Su'ad Ibrahim entitled "The Soul Rest" at Hamaourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 553098), until Nov. 11.

* Paintings by Patrice Cadennec at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 20.

* Works by Bahraini artist Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weiddeb, until Nov. 15. Also displaying a new collection of works by contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).

Mulki highlights Kingdom's need to develop information technology

AMMAN (Petra) — A two-day conference on informatics was opened at the Royal Cultural Centre Saturday by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki, who deputised at the opening session for HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

In his address, Dr. Mulki said Jordan has made some advances in promoting its informatics, or information technology, sector in the course of overall development, but the Kingdom has a long way to go to shift from its present role of being a recipient of scientific knowledge to interacting with the informatics world.

Stressing that the private and public sectors must cooperate in shouldering the responsibility of promoting informatics, Dr. Mulki said "we still lack an appropriate and efficient communications network pertaining to the exchange of information, and we have only acquired a tiny portion of informatics systems."

"Jordan has introduced training programmes for its human resources in various fields but the country still lacks certain specialisations needed to enable the Kingdom to accommodate the rapidly

advancing informatics technology. This should prompt us to reconsider informatics-related legislation," he continued.

The effects of the informatics revolution will overshadow the importance of the industrial revolution, according to Dr. Mulki, because he said information and technology are rapidly encompassing every field of daily life and are considered the dividing line between backwardness and progress.

Stating that informatics has been given due attention in Europe, Dr. Mulki said 25 per cent of European homes own computers and that 46 out of every 100 persons own a telephone, compared to Jordan's ten per cent, according to a World Bank report.

While only two per cent of national income in the Third World is spent on technology and information, the rate rises to 15 per cent in industrialised nations, he said.

Amjad 'Abweh, vice president of the Jordan Computer Association, said Jordan's imminent association with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) presents a major challenge to Jordanian industries to improve the standard and quality of

their products so that they can compete on the world market.

For this reason, he said, the country's educational and training programmes must be re-examined and geared up in order to help them respond favourably to the world market's needs.

Participants in the meeting will review several working papers dealing with informatics, data systems in Jordan, a national information network, criteria and standards governing the quality of products, and the outlook for the use of the Internet in Jordan.

Health professionals to 'temporarily accept' offer; two-hour strike planned for Monday

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives of the estimated 3,500 public sector health professionals who have been staging on and off work stoppages over the past few weeks have today accepted the government's offer of 36 per cent of the patients' fund.

Basem Dajani, the president of the Jordan Medical Association and spokesperson for the strikers, said the health professionals are still demanding that the government pay them, as an incentive, a 60 per cent share of the patients' fund at later stages.

"We will continue to demand full rights, which

include pensions for health workers to be calculated on two-thirds of their salaries, an overtime allowance of 35 per cent of the total salary, an increase of the professional allowance from 90 per cent to 120 per cent, the right to a housing estate, scholarships for advanced training, and scholarships for their children at state universities," according to Dr. Dajani.

Dr. Dajani said he expected that a ministerial committee created during the crisis will convene next week to discuss steps

for a final solution to the problem.

He denied that the crisis was motivated by a personal problem between the associations and the minister of health and medical care and stated that the health professionals are demanding their legitimate rights.

He described a meeting held last week with former health ministers as successful, adding that these former ministers have created a committee to deal with the crisis.

Sa'id Abu Maizar, the president of the Jordan

Dentists' Association, told the press conference that the health professionals' demands are legitimate and are backed by decisions taken by Parliament and endorsed by a Royal Decree.

He stressed that the work stoppage observed by the health workers was not politically motivated, but rather an attempt to secure rights equal to those given to their colleagues working for the Royal Medical Services of the Jordan Armed Forces and the University of Jordan Hospital.

Cabinet approves sale of government shares in businesses

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday approved recommendations by the Higher Ministerial Committee to sell part of the government's shares in the Jordan Cement Factory Company and the Ma'in Spa Company to the private sector.

The Cabinet also approved a recommendation by the same committee on the transfer of state-owned land worth JD6,636,304 to the National Electric Power Company, which is currently using the land.

The Cabinet endorsed an agreement with the Netherlands on promoting and protecting investments and authorised Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki to sign the agreement during his stay



PRINCE FIRAS OPENS CONFERENCE: Deputising for Her Majesty Queen Noor, His Majesty King Hussein's Health Secretary Prince Firas Saturday opens the Eighth Arab Conference for Biological Sciences, which was organised by the Jordanian Society for Biological Sciences in cooperation with the University of Jordan and the Arab Biologists Union. Several Arab countries are taking part in the three-day conference (Petra photo)

Diabetes conference opens with call for more research, education

AMMAN (Petra) — The National Centre for Diabetes, Endocrine, and Inherited Diseases, in conjunction with the U.S.-based Physicians for Peace, Saturday opened a three-day conference on diabetes with the participation of physicians and specialists from the Royal Medical Services, the University of Jordan, the Ministry of Health, and the private sector.

The conference, the first of its kind in the country, was opened by Mohammad Zahiri, president of the Jordan Diabetes Society, who said diabetes is a worldwide problem that afflicts communities in both developed and developing nations.

Dr. Zahiri, who stood in for Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi at the opening ceremony, said serious efforts should be made to spread awareness among the public on the dangers of this disease.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Care has been providing the necessary medical equipment and drugs at its hospitals and health centres and has been following up international scientific and medical research to find more advanced methods of dealing with the disease, he said.

Kamel Ajlouni, the centre's director, echoed the call for intensive scientific research efforts to combat diabetes, which he stated costs an estimated \$130 billion annually in treatment worldwide.

He outlined the centre's activities and programmes for treating the disease and stressed the need for close collaboration

between various world institutions, particularly the Physicians for Peace, to fight diabetes.

Mahmoud Abu Khalaf, director of the University of Jordan Hospital, said specialists believe that the next decade will present serious challenges resulting from the expected huge increase in the number of diabetic patients, as well as other chronic, non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and arthritis.

During the meeting, the participants will discuss diagnosis of diabetes, the use of nuclear technology in treating patients, educating diabetic patients and their families on dealing with the disease, and diabetes affecting children, among other topics presented in working papers.

JORDAN TIMES FAX

696-183

Industrial nations make progress on CO2 pact

TOKYO (R) — Major industrialised nations made progress Saturday towards a pact to cut greenhouse gas emissions in the next century, but considerable gaps remain, British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott said.

"We managed to narrow some of the differences and eliminate some of the problems — and they are still considerable, make no mistake about it," Mr. Prescott, who chaired a day of talks on the topic here, told reporters.

"We're now moving away from rhetoric onto the actual negotiations and the realities," he said.

Ministers from 13 developed nations and the European Union (EU) met Saturday as part of a final push ahead of a high-profile Dec. 1-10 climate conference in Kyoto, western Japan.

That is where nearly 170 signatories to a 1992 United Nations Climate Change Convention will try to hammer out binding targets for developed nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions in the next century.

Sunday, negotiators and ministers from eight developing nations will join the discussions, although China was not expected to attend while India had yet to reply to the invitation. Both are key players in the thorny debate.

Scientists say the buildup of carbon dioxide and other such gases in the atmosphere will alter the climate, causing more severe storms, droughts and floods and raising sea levels by melting part of the polar ice caps.

Negotiations to date have faltered on a host of problems including two key issues — how high should industrial nations set their own binding targets and how will poorer nations be brought into the global warming battle.

The EU has proposed an ambitious goal for industrial nations of 15 per cent cuts from 1990 levels by 2010.

The European plan has come under fierce attack from Japan, the United States and Australia, which say the target is unrealistic and a threat to the world economy.

Critics also charge Europe's proposal, which calls for the EU as a whole to meet a 15 per cent target while letting member states have variable goals, relies too heavily on cuts in Britain and Germany.

The United States, faced with an intense campaign by U.S. industry against binding targets, has proposed that developed countries stabilise their emissions at 1990 levels by 2010.

Washington also insists developed countries promise to cut their emissions, although it has been vague about when.

Japan, host to the December conference, has proposed a five per cent cut from 1990 levels as an average over the period from 2008 to 2012, but would let nations lower targets in certain cases and would not require targets to be fully binding.

Like Europe, however, Japan has said developing nations need not promise to make cuts at the Kyoto conference but should be persuaded to do so at a later date.

Developing nations argue industrialised nations should put their own houses in order before foisting targets on others.

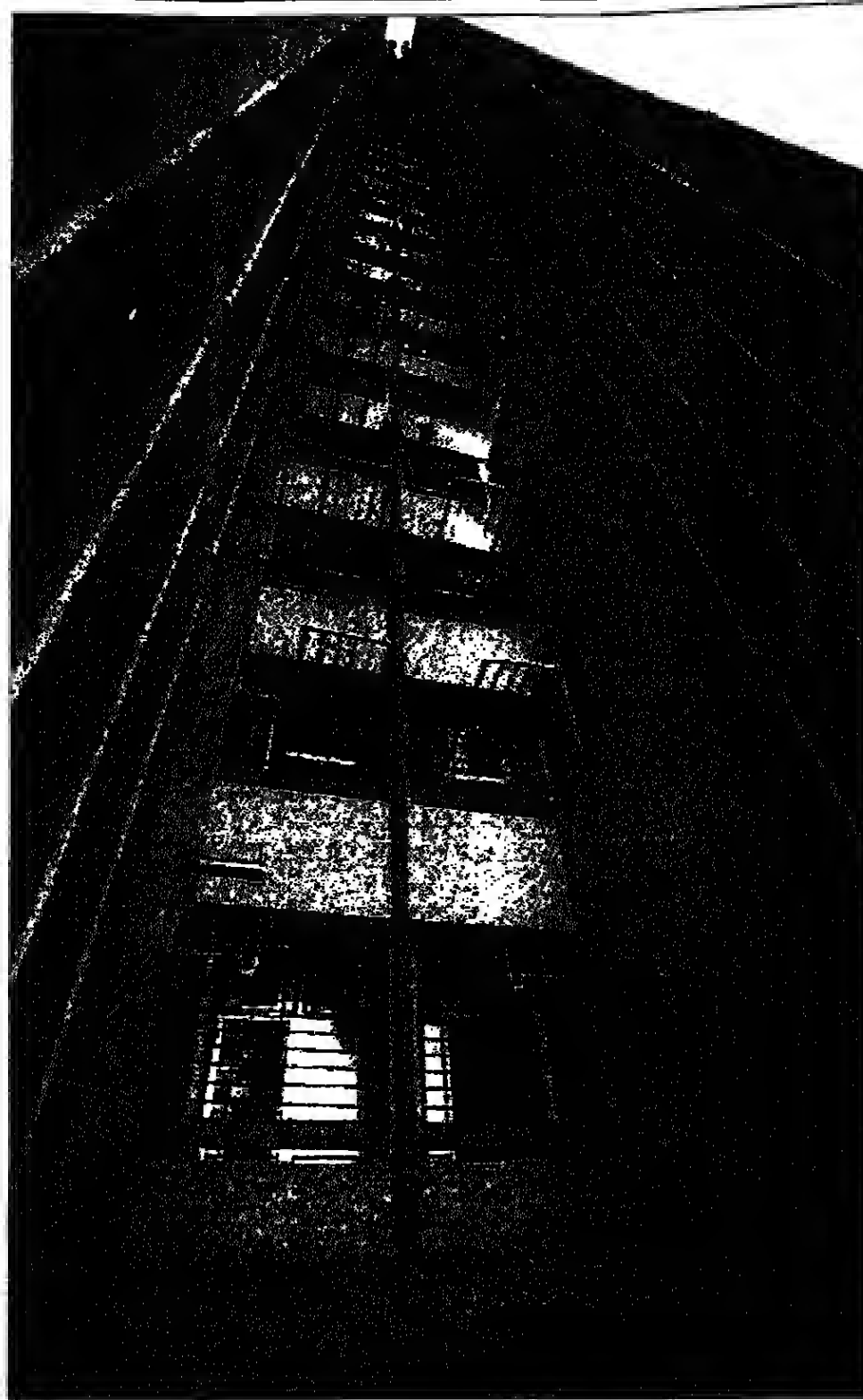
"They've made it very clear that they do feel that developed nations should first put their money on the table and show that they are prepared to take those essential steps, and that's what we are in the course of discussing," Mr. Prescott said.

He added that he would have a "positive statement" to make to the developing nations Sunday.

At the heart of this feud is developing nations' belief that industrialised economies want to derail their development with tough environmental standards that would strangle growth.

Despite the tough road ahead, however, Mr. Prescott expressed optimism over the outlook for Kyoto.

"If the mood and the political will is there, I'm sure we will be able to get agreement in Kyoto," he said.



The highrise apartment building in Hong Kong's Tseung Kwan O district, where three-year-old girl Lau Tim fell from a 13th-storey kitchen window and miraculously survived with only injuries to her shoulder (Reuters photo)

H. Kong toddler survives 13-storey fall

HONG KONG (AFP) — A three-year-old Hong Kong girl plunged 13 floors from an apartment window and suffered only minor injuries, a government spokesman said Saturday.

Tiny Lau Tim had been left sleeping in the family flat while her mother went shopping Friday.

Police said the girl was believed to have woken up and searched for her mother

before standing on a chair to see if she was outside. Tim then toppled through an open window, bouncing off washing lines outside other apartments and landing on a metal canopy near the ground.

Residents found the girl crying on the floor and called an ambulance. She was listed as being in stable condition in hospital, suffering only a fractured

shoulder. Police said they had warned her parents that she should not be left alone but would not press charges.

The vast majority of Hong Kong's 6.5 million people live in high rise apartment blocks and people are regularly killed or injured here by falling from the buildings, whether accidentally or to commit suicide.

N. Korea lets Japanese wives visit long-lost homes

NARITA, Japan (R) — A group of 15 Japanese women, married to North Koreans but long barred from returning home, arrived Saturday for a week-long reunion with their families after waits of up to four decades.

The women, aged 55 to 84, are planning to visit their birthplaces, meet long-lost relatives and pay respects at their ancestors' graves.

An estimated 1,800 Japanese women moved with their spouses to North Korea between 1959 and 1982. Pyongyang had long refused to allow the women to visit Japan, and the issue had damaged relations between the two countries.

Most of the women, whose husbands are descendants of Koreans who moved or were brought to Japan before World War II, had not been heard from for years.

"I was so happy I could

hardly sleep after I learned about my homecoming trip," said Kim Cho Me in Beijing, where the group made a brief stopover.

Japan, which ruled Korea as a colony from 1910 to 1945, established diplomatic relations with capitalist South Korea in 1965 but has yet to forge formal ties with the Communist North.

North Korea's decision in September to allow the women to visit was met by a Japanese offer to provide \$27 million worth of humanitarian aid to Pyongyang to stave off famine in the reclusive Communist state.

Tokyo had cited Pyongyang's refusal to allow the wives to visit Japan as one reason why it refused to send food aid to ease the famine threatening millions of North Koreans.

The women's visit also comes ahead of a Nov. 11-14 visit to Pyongyang by a joint delegation from the

ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Social Democratic Party and the Sakigake Party, partners in the Japanese government's loose coalition.

Japanese officials said Tokyo and Pyongyang were expected to restart the long-stalled process of normalising their relations.

The wives are not the only emotive issue impeding better relations, however. Japan alleges that North Korean agents on submarines have literally kidnapped Japanese people off the beaches and forced them to work in North Korea, often giving Japanese language lessons.

Eight rounds of talks on normalising relations ended abruptly in November 1992, when North Korea stormed out after Japan brought up the kidnapping allegations, which Pyongyang has always denied.

Hong Kong man nabbed for alleged Internet fraud

HONG KONG (AFP) — A Hong Kong man has been arrested for fraudulently ordering air tickets through the Internet, police said here Saturday.

The 24-year-old former student allegedly obtained credit card details from bills sent to staff and students at a common mail box at a university office, a spokesman added.

He then used their numbers to order tickets from travel agents on the Internet and had them sent to the same mail box, the spokesman said.

A raid on the man's flat Friday allegedly uncovered 12 air tickets valued at \$12,000 and details of other people's credit cards.

The fraud came to light

when two credit card holders reported they had been billed for plane tickets purchases they had not made.

Many credit card transactions are made on the Internet simply by providing numbers and personal details, though more secure procedures are being introduced.

British nanny awaits her fate

WASHINGTON (R) — Along with tens of thousands of her allies on both sides of the Atlantic, British woman Louise Woodward awaits the verdict of a jury to see if she will get a reduced sentence or possible freedom.

Support for the 19-year-old woman has grown since she was sentenced to life in prison last week for the murder of a Massachusetts baby.

Ms. Woodward's lawyers have asked Judge Zobel Tuesday to overturn the jury's decision, and he could decide as early as next week.

Deborah Eappen, 32, the mother of Matthew, eight months, who died of a skull fracture last February, called the intense support for Ms. Woodward "surreal."

She told the Boston Globe newspaper that in her opinion, "the jury was fair and just and brave" in its verdict, and that she has "no doubt" her child died from "child abuse" inflicted by Ms. Woodward.

"It truly frightens people in the core that someone who looks so normal ... could do this, so people refuse to believe it," she said. "It's easier to say that Debbie and Sunny Eappen did something wrong; they were mean to the girl; they overworked her. People write to us that ... I am at fault."

In England, where the press has widely denounced Ms. Woodward's sentence, her support group has received tens of thousands of dollars in donations and thousands of messages of sympathy by mail and E-mail.

Three soccer teams, including the famed Liverpool team, have joined the campaign for Ms. Woodward's freedom.

In the United States, where demonstrations demanding Ms. Woodward's release continue in front of the Massachusetts courthouses where she was sentenced, 60 per cent of 14,000 people who participated in a Boston television poll said Ms. Woodward was innocent and should be freed. Only 15 per cent said the judge should uphold the verdict.

The trial was broadcast on television and thousands of newspapers worldwide have covered her story. Hundreds of Internet sites are doing the same. One site, created last Sunday in England, has received tens of thousands of "hits", or visitors, since its inception.

"People can easily identify with this story. The subject of babysitters concerns them, and Louise Woodward is not a textbook criminal. They think she has been the victim of her lawyers' bad strategy," Jeffrey Reiman, an American University law expert, told AFP.

Friday, the American television channel Court TV began rebroadcasting the trial's highlights. They will continue running through Saturday and Sunday.

The verdict has had one direct consequence: the death sentence will not be reintroduced in Massachusetts this year. One vote was lacking to pass the law Thursday night in the state's house of representatives after Democrat John Slattery changed his mind.

He said that the controversy surrounding Ms. Woodward's sentence left him with a deeply unsettled conviction about the possibility of executing the wrong person.

Judge Zobel has up to 60 days to make up his mind. The defence wants him to free the young woman, call for a new trial or reduce the sentence to involuntary manslaughter, which could lead to her rapid release.

He will make the decision Monday at the earliest. To avoid "the media circus," he will make his decision public on the Internet and send it to selected media, who will immediately put it on their websites.

This procedure was denied in the United States, where a judge's decision is usually made public in court.

Ailing Gorbachev reported better after care

GENEVA (R) — Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, dogged by illness during a visit to Switzerland this week, was Saturday reported much better and planning to fly home Sunday.

A spokeswoman for the environmental Green Cross international organisation, over which he presides, said Mr. Gorbachev was still at his hotel in Bern, where doctors have been treating him for an allergy problem.

The affliction prevented him from attending a gala dinner in Zurich Friday at which he planned to promote his campaign for better protection of the global environment.

Earlier in the week the 66-year-old Mr. Gorbachev — whose reforms of the old Soviet system helped bring about the collapse of Communist rule — had undergone two days of extensive medical tests at a hospital in Bern, the Swiss capital.

"He seems a lot better, he still intends to leave tomorrow," Geneva-based Green Cross spokeswoman Sophie Barley told Reuters. He was expected to fly back to Moscow from Zurich.

The Friday benefit dinner in the Swiss financial centre was to have been his last scheduled public event during a week-long trip to Switzerland, which has an active national chapter of his organisation.

A Swiss Green Cross official said the tests he had undergone during the week had weakened him.

Mr. Gorbachev, once both Communist Party chief and president of the Soviet Empire covering one sixth of the globe, was forced to step down in December 1991 when leaders of the republics which made up the apparently mighty superpower decided to break it up.

Since then, he has sunk into political oblivion at home — scorned by both liberals who saw him as a half-hearted reformer and by millions of people who blame him for the end of a system that provided them with basic social security.

But he has travelled widely abroad promoting green causes, arguing that mankind could be heading for disaster unless more attention is paid to environmental degradation. He is due to visit Japan later this month.

He is still widely respected outside Russia for his role in ending the cold war, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize.

A spokesman for Mr. Gorbachev said two days ago that he had suffered unspecified allergic reactions from time to time over the past few months that caused skin irritation.

"Perhaps it is from water or food, but we need to find out from what," the spokesman, Vladimir Polyakov, told reporters. "Other than this, he does not have any (health) problems."

Mr. Gorbachev was forced to miss a benefit dinner Thursday in Basel when his allergies flared up, causing his face to swell. Only hours after he checked out of a Bern hospital following two days of tests.

He had appeared fit and cracked jokes as he left Bern's Inselspital hospital Thursday after checks that ran longer than expected. "The rumours that I am dying have ended," he told reporters.

Winds blow Indonesia haze away from neighbours

JAKARTA (R) — Winds from a tropical depression in the South China Sea are blowing smog from Indonesian fires away from neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia, official data showed Saturday.

Satellite data released by the Indonesian Environmental Impact Management Agency (Bapedal) also showed 15 "hot spots", areas where fires are generally burning, in Kalimantan, the Indonesian side of Borneo Island, Friday evening.

Six hot spots were recorded in Southern Sumatra.

The Bapedal report, compiled from data from the National Meteorological Agency (BMG), Disaster Coordination Centre and National Space and Aeronautics Agency (LAPAN), showed winds at 1,000 metres blowing from the northwest from the South China Sea at up to 35 kilometres per hour.

The winds from Kalimantan, where large amounts of smoke linger, blew in the direction of Southern Sumatra rather than Singapore and Malaysia. Satellite photographs showed large amounts of smoke from Sumatra drifting over the Indian Ocean.

Visibility reports from the regions showed smoke still a problem in a number of areas even though the fires in these districts had been extinguished.

The worse report came from the city of Jambi on Sumatra Island where visibility was less than 100 metres Friday evening and between 100-700 metres in the Kerinci district, also in Jambi province.

Visibility at the key Indonesian airports of Jakarta, Medan in North Sumatra and Denpasar on Bali was above five km, but regional airports in Jambi and Palembang on Sumatra as well as Palangkaraya on Kalimantan were closed because of the haze.

Khmer Rouge voice support for Cambodian peace

PHNOM PENH (R) — The chief spokesman of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge guerrilla group Saturday said he supported a call by King Norodom Sihanouk for a peaceful settlement to the nation's political conflict.

Khieu Samphan, president of the political arm of the Khmer Rouge, said in a message to the king on the rebels' clandestine radio that he stood behind King Sihanouk's most recent appeal for peace earlier this week.

"I just received the king's statement from Nov. 4 which appealed to all Cambodians to make a national peace settlement," said the message read by an announcer on the radio, the Khmer Rouge's propaganda mouthpiece.

"This is the wish of all Cambodians inside the country as well as overseas. I totally support the king's proposal," it said.

It did not elaborate on what steps the rebels

would take to pursue peace.

King Sihanouk has repeatedly called on his subjects to cease fighting and reconcile since powerful second Prime Minister Hun Sen deposed the monarch's son, former first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh, on July 6.

Fighting has continued since July in pockets of the country's north and west, where Prince Ranariddh's rag-tag army has allied with Khmer Rouge guerrillas, architects of the 1975-79 "killing fields" regime, to fight Hun Sen's government forces.

In his statement, Khieu Samphan, the French-educated former head of state during the Khmer Rouge regime and public face of the rebels, said the recent fighting was "aimed at peace, maintaining territory and protecting future generations."

More than a million Cambodians died of dis-

ease, starvation, hard labour or were executed as enemies of the Maoist-style Khmer Rouge revolution until their regime was toppled by an invading Vietnamese army in early 1979.

Pol Pot, the long-time leader of the movement, was ousted in mid-June following a bloody split among the group's top leadership and was placed under house arrest by his former comrades in late July.

Prince Ranariddh and Khmer Rouge leaders say the group has completely changed since Pol Pot's demise, but Hun Sen has called that assertion a trick.

The shaky coalition of Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen began falling apart last year when the two leaders vied for the allegiance of defecting Khmer Rouge soldiers. Prince Ranariddh was on the verge of a peace deal with the remaining rebels when he was overthrown.

British nanny awaits her fate

WASHINGTON (AP) — A British nanny who was accused of murdering her employer's two children is awaiting her fate in a court in London.

Ms. Woodward is charged with the deaths of two children, aged 1 and 2, in 1996. She is accused of poisoning them with a substance called 'Meadowcroft'.

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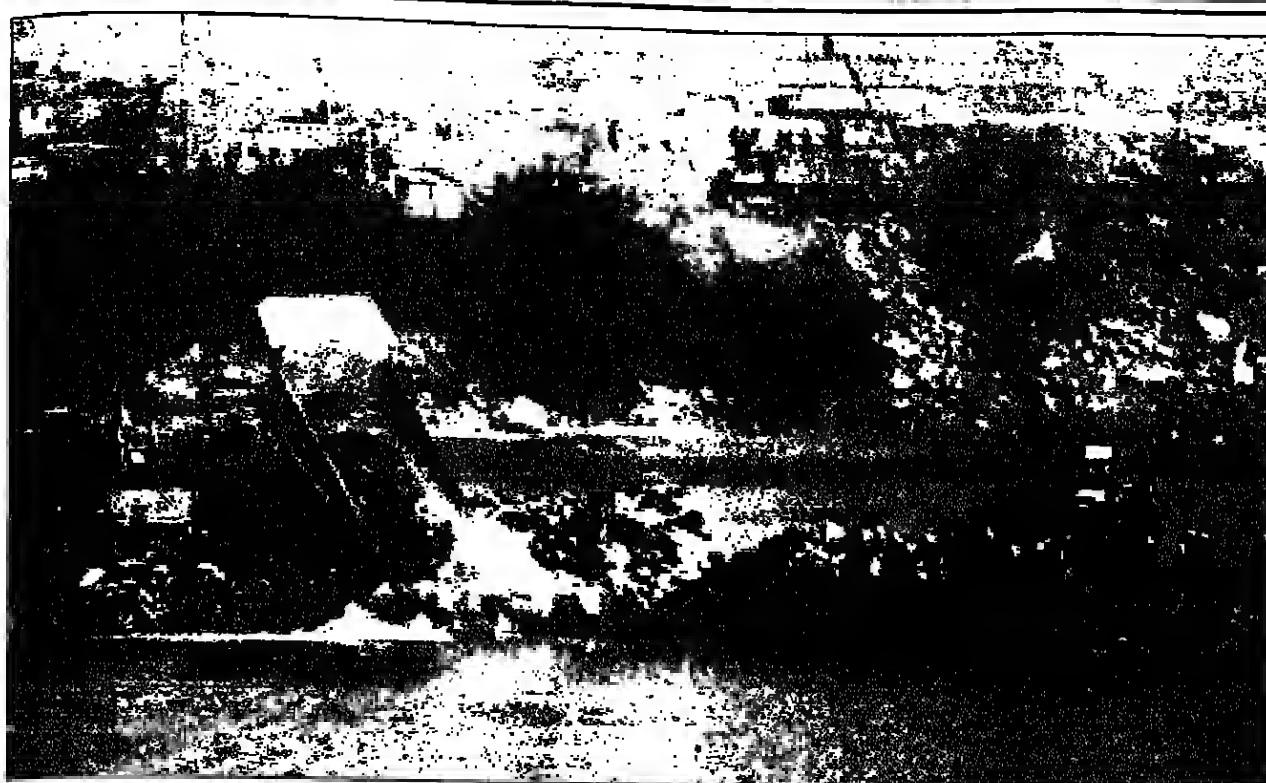
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Water splashes out as giant lorries dump one of the last truckloads of rocks into the Yangtze River at the so-called Dragon Mouth of Sandouping, central Hubei province (Reuters photo)

China blocks Yangtze for controversial dam

SANDOUPING, China (R) — Firecrackers exploded over the Yangtze Saturday as China blocked the main channel of the world's third longest river to begin work on the mammoth and controversial Three Gorges Dam.

China is trumpeting its success at stemming the river's mighty flow with two temporary stone and earth dams as proof of its technical prowess.

It says the project will fuel industrial growth in the country's Yangtze heartland.

But critics maintain the dam is an environmental nightmare.

One billion tonnes of industrial and human waste will flow into the dam's giant reservoir, and there are fears that reduced water flow will turn the lake into a giant cesspool.

Detractors also charge that the forced relocation of 1.2 million residents is a human rights disaster and say countless archaeological

treasures will be lost forever in a watery grave. Officials insist they have addressed all concerns, saying jobs will be found for the displaced masses and environmental damage will be minimal.

President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng stood on the Yangtze's banks as a giant earthmover dumped the last load of stone and gravel to fill a small gap and complete the second of two temporary dams that now form a giant enclosure.

"The blocking has been successful," said Mr. Li, the Chinese leader most closely associated with the project to create the world's mightiest hydropower station.

The dam is aimed at slaking China's growing thirst for electricity and taming the killer floods of the Yangtze, the world's third longest river behind the Nile and Amazon.

When completed in 12 years, the dam will pump out 18,200 megawatts of electricity from its 26 gen-

erators, each one equal to a medium-sized nuclear reactor. Mr. Jiang called the blockage a major milestone on a project that will stretch to the year 2009 and is officially forecast to cost \$29 billion.

"The age-old dream of the Chinese people to develop and utilise the resources of The Three Gorges section of the Yangtze has come closer to being true," Mr. Jiang said at the ceremony.

Revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen first proposed building the dam in 1919, but daunting technical and social problems kept the plan on the drawing boards for more than 60 years.

Chinese leaders are clearly concerned that the mass relocation of 1.2 million people could spark social unrest.

"A successful resettlement of the people affected by the (dam) is a key to the progress and eventual success of the project," Mr. Jiang said at the river bank ceremony.

The official Xinhua news agency said work on the temporary dam had stopped briefly late Saturday morning when part of one wall slid slightly.

Water will now be pumped out from the enclosure to create a dry crater from which the towering concrete walls of the 175-metre permanent dam will rise.

The temporary dam walls — one upstream and the other downstream — are an ambitious project in themselves, requiring 11 million cubic metres of rubble.

They must be further raised and widened before next year's flood season begins in May, when water levels could rise another 20 metres.

Workers did not completely block the Yangtze, as a diversion channel was dug to allow cargo and passenger ships to ply the river. Once the dam is completed, a shiplock and a shiplift will allow vessels to pass.

Grandmother's torture lessons influence murderer

SYDNEY (R) — The grandmother of a double murderer played a pivotal role in his early criminal development, buying him kittens and teaching him how to torture them by cutting off their ears and tails during his school holidays, an Australian court was told.

Richard Leonard, 24, was convicted of murdering one man by shooting him through the heart with a bow and arrow and has pleaded guilty

to stabbing a second man 37 times before slitting his throat. A forensic psychiatrist said Mr. Leonard might have lost the ability to adapt to the needs and sufferings of both animals and humans at an early age, the Australian newspaper reported Saturday.

Mr. Leonard's deeply religious father told the court he had spoken to his mother not long before her death and that she had confirmed his son's story about the cats.

Australian police baffled by object from sky

PERTH, Australia (APF) — Police in Western Australia admitted they were baffled Saturday after a small egg-shaped canister apparently fell from the sky onto a farm before exploding.

Police Inspector Dennis Perich said it had been established that the object, which fell on the small town of Muchea, 35 kilometres from here, was not space debris or radioactive.

"Investigations into what the object is and where it may have come from

are continuing," he said. "The canister has disintegrated, but the farmer was able to take a sample of the liquid oozing from the canister."

"He described it as a green, bubbling fluid."

Mr. Perich said a radiation management group and health authorities were working with police in a bid to solve the mystery.

Police have not revealed the exact location of the farm or the name of the farmer.

German scientist said granted asylum in U.S.

NEW YORK (R) — A U.S. immigration court judge has granted asylum to a visiting German member of the Church of Scientology who claimed she would be subjected to religious persecution on return home, the New York Times reported in its Saturday edition.

The newspaper quoted a Scientology official and the unnamed woman's lawyer as saying the immigration judge, who was not identified, approved her application to remain in the United States after a February hearing.

Officials at the U.S. State Department and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service in Washington said they were unaware of the case, the Times reported.

German embassy officials in Washington were also unaware of the asylum decision, the newspaper said.

It said while few details of the case were available, it was believed to be the first time the United States had given asylum protection to a Scientology member. The Church of Scientology has been waging a highly public international campaign against what it considers discrimination against its members by the German government.

The Church of Scientology in a news release Saturday said the woman was granted asylum because she "made a clear and convincing showing of a well-founded fear of persecution by the German government solely because of her religious belief."

The church said the woman had asked that her identity or domicile not be revealed because "she fears that relatives, who still live in Germany, will become targets of harassment and abuse by the German government."

Sri Lankan peace hopes dim as Tigers reject political deal

COLOMBO (APF) — Sri Lanka's hopes of an early end to dragging ethnic bloodshed have dimmed after Tamil Tiger guerrillas formally rejected a radical power-sharing peace plan, Tamil sources here said Saturday.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) described as a "political conspiracy" a proposal by the Colombo government that seeks to turn the country into a de facto federal state in exchange for peace.

Tamil sources quoted the latest October issue of the official organ of the rebels, the Viduthalaipuligal or Liberation Tiger, as saying that the government's devolution plan failed to recognise a "Tamil nation."

The LTTE, which was labelled a "foreign terrorist organisation" by the U.S. State Department last month, had earlier opposed the devolution plan but the latest announcement was

the most direct rejection, Tamil sources said.

The Tigers said their battle against security forces was comparable to a war between the armies of two countries. The Tigers are demanding the establishment of an independent state called Eelam in the northeast.

The government plan envisages granting greater autonomy to minorities in exchange for ethnic peace.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga who initiated the power-sharing plan in August 1995 has offered to talk with the rebels over political arrangements but there has been no response from the LTTE.

Two days after a huge truck bombing in the capital Colombo last month, Ms. Kumaratunga said she was willing to talk "even with the devil" on her political package.

The government plan is expected to be taken up in parliament early next year

after the legislature concludes a debate on the national budget.

Under the radical political plan, the government seeks to set up regional councils which will have greater authority over land, law and order and the ability to negotiate and receive direct foreign funding.

The ruling party lacks the mandatory two-thirds majority in parliament to realise the reforms and is dependent on the main opposition United National Party (UNP) which has said it will oppose any move to divide the country.

The opposition has said that there should be talks with the LTTE to effectively implement the peace plan otherwise there will be no end to the ongoing violence, particularly in the north-east of the country.

An almost daily death toll is reported from the embattled region. Saturday, Tiger guerrillas

snatched a police post at Poovarasankulam in the north, killing five constables, defence officials said.

They said another soldier was killed further north Friday while troops shot dead two Tiger rebels elsewhere in the east on the same day.

Government forces are currently engaged in their biggest ever ground offensive against the LTTE in a bid to open a key land route to the northern peninsula of Jaffna.

Junior Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte last month said the military had entered a "final phase" of its operations against the LTTE and was hopeful of making the rebels a "phenomena of the past."

More than 50,000 people have been killed in the drawn out conflict in the past 25 years and previous political and military attempts to address minority issues and the Tigers have ended in failure.

Napalmed girl seen in 1972 photo wants to help other child victims

CHICAGO (AP) — The Vietnamese woman who was photographed as a 9-year-old fleeing a 1972 U.S. napalm attack that seared her body is launching a foundation to help innocent young victims of war.

"I want to give back all the love and care that I have received over the years from so many people. So this can be a way for me to help people," 34-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc said Friday.

The Kim Foundation is still in the beginning stages, and it has not yet been determined exactly what it will do to help children around the world.

On June 8, 1972, a fleeing Phuc was photographed, naked and screaming, after a U.S. air strike turned her village north of Saigon into a cauldron of flames.

Two of her brothers and two cousins were killed. The flames had burned her clothing off.

Associated Press Photographer Nick Ut won a Pulitzer Prize for the photo, one of the widely known images of the war.

"I really think this picture stopped the war and changed the war," Ms. Phuc said.

Ms. Phuc was in and out of hospitals for years, underwent 17 operations and still feels pain from the wounds.

She is now married, with two sons, and lives in Toronto.

Vietnam sends Mayday for typhoon 'calamity'

HANOI (R) — Vietnam urged its neighbours Saturday to join search and rescue operations for hundreds of fishermen who went missing after Typhoon Linda pounded the country's southern tip and waters last weekend.

Branding the storm "a calamity of the century", the Foreign Ministry told a news conference that it had appealed to embassies and international organisations in Hanoi for help with a disaster which has left tens of thousands homeless.

It also passed on a request from the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) for neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines to join its armada of vessels looking for survivors.

The CCFSC said that by early Friday afternoon, 304 people had been confirmed dead and 1,937 were still missing.

However, a Reuters tally of figures from 14 provinces affected by Linda's violent winds and torrential rain put the number of lives lost at 455 and the missing at over 2,500.

So far more than 3,500 people, many of whom clung to buoys or broken boat planks for days, have been plucked from the sea by

patrolling ships or helicopters.

However, a disaster expert in Hanoi, who declined to be named, said more than half of those still unaccounted for would probably have died already.

The U.N.-sponsored Disaster Management Unit said the estimated cost of emergency food, medicine, clothing, shelter and sanitation needs in just four of the worst-hit provinces was \$12.03 million.

A local newspaper Friday said the storm, which damaged or flooded 226,000 hectares of ricefields with salt-water and wrecked 64,500 houses, caused an economic loss of some \$400 million.

The United Nations said in statement that four of its agencies had made preliminary pledges of aid for Linda's victims totalling \$255,000, most of it to assist the CCFSC in damage reporting, needs assessment and aid coordination.

Bilateral aid donations totalling \$507,000 have rolled in from Switzerland, South Korea and Australia, while local organisations — including the police, the post and telecommunications agency, the railway union and a bank — have sent money to the victims.

Vietnam is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, suffering river flooding, flash floods and typhoons between June and December every year.

However, the heavily-populated area which was buffeted by Linda last Sunday is not normally prone to typhoons and had not suffered anything on that scale since 1904.

Marshall Silver, chief technical advisor of flood mitigation for the United Nations development programme in Vietnam, told the Foreign Ministry news conference the typhoon developed rapidly, leaving little time to warn fishermen out at sea.

The typhoon tracked west after hitting Vietnam, killing at least 34 people in Cambodia and Thailand. However, figures provided by officials in those countries Thursday showed that at least 180, mostly fishermen, were still missing.

Late Friday the typhoon was centred 400 kilometres north of Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in the bay of Bengal and was moving northwards.

A senior government meteorologist in Calcutta said the storm may miss India and veer towards Burma and Bangladesh.

Death in Geneva becomes too dear

GENEVA (APF) — For Geneva's public purse, dying has become too dear. To reduce its debt, the municipality has decided to cut back on funerals, which it has provided free of charge to all comers since the beginning of the century. The tradition was rooted in the idea that every citizen of this Calvinist city should be equal in death, giving the poorest as much a right to a dignified funeral as a millionaire.

But tradition has died its own death following a landmark decision by the municipal council at the beginning of October.

Henceforth, only proper Geneva residents have the right to a free burial or cremation, eliminating at a stroke people living elsewhere and building owners whose white-cross passports formally list them as citizens of Geneva.

Every Swiss at birth becomes automatically a citizen of the country and of the commune to which his parents are linked, even though the person may not have been born, or may never

have lived in the town or village marked in his travelling papers.

With the new ruling, Geneva has joined the ranks of most Swiss cities that offer no-charge and often no-frills funerals to their residents, believing they have the right as taxpayers to benefit from a final social service.

"In Geneva, a political decision was made for economic reasons," said Jean-Claude Schaulin, chief of the municipal funeral parlour.

The new restrictions will cut services by about one third, or the equivalent of 300 to 400 deceased persons per year, and produce savings of at least 350,000 Swiss francs (\$230,000), he said.

Which is just a drop in the bucket given the city's 60 million Swiss franc debt.

"Because of being in the red, corners have to be cut everywhere," said Jean Murith, director of a leading mortician which has been active in Geneva for 110 years.

Mr. Murith is not complaining however, since his business is set to conquer

new niches a result of the measure which was debated for 25 years before being put into place.

Geneva's largesse, abused in certain cases, previously extended to those living in garden-ringed villas in the poshest areas facing the lake, which Mr. Murith openly objects to.

"It's appalling to want to save a few pennies when burying your parents. It's said that the manner in which the dead are laid to rest reveals the soul of a society." Many of the well-heeled in town will now have to foot the bills for their loved ones' burials though actual Geneva residents will still enjoy a free service no matter how rich they are.

The municipality offers a complete, but simple service ranging from provision of the coffin to cremation.

If relatives want something more dramatic or personalised, they have the option of enlisting a private firm and foregoing the city's bounty.

Up to now, no one has complained about the service, Mr. Schaulin said.

Powerful earthquake strikes China's Tibet region

BEDING (R) — A powerful earthquake hit a remote area of China's mountainous Tibet region Saturday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties, officials said.

Chinese seismologists originally said the quake measured 7.9 on the Richter Scale, but later revised that to 7.5. They did not explain the adjustment.

Geologists in the United States and Japan both put the quake at 7.9, saying it was believed to be the largest

instrumentally recorded in the area.

The quake, among the strongest to strike China, had its epicentre at 35.2 degrees north, 87.3 degrees east, an official with the State Seismological Bureau said.

That is about 700 kilometres northwest of the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, near the Himalayan area's border with China's Xinjiang region, where several earthquakes this year have killed about 50 people.

"There is no news of any deaths or injuries," the official said by telephone.

At the U.S. geological survey in Golden, Colorado, geophysicist Stewart Koyanagi said: "This earthquake is really big. I am sure there have been bigger ones in that area, but we don't have any recorded larger than today's."

An official with the Tibet Seismological Bureau said authorities were checking to see if there were any casualties or damage.

"That is a really remote place. There aren't many people out there," the Tibet official said.

Tibet is home to about 2.3 million people, many of them yak and sheep herders.

An earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale struck an area of southern Tibet Monday. No injuries were reported in that tremor.

Experts say China is passing through a period of high seismicological activity and reports of moderate tremors

are common, although many occur in sparsely populated areas.

China suffered the worst earthquake in modern history in 1976, when a tremor measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale levelled the northern city of Tangshan, killing at least 240,000 people.

The most devastating earthquake in recorded history hit China's northwestern Shaanxi province in 1556, killing an estimated 830,000 people.

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Try neutral inspectors

THE TUG-OF-WAR between Baghdad and Washington over Iraq's decision to har U.S. nationals on the U.N. inspection teams from entering its territory is threatening to escalate into an armed conflict unless a reasonable compromise is swiftly found. Iraq maintains that its dispute is not with the U.N. but rather with the U.S. over the presence of American inspectors on Iraqi soil. Iraq accuses the U.S. inspectors of spying against it and using the information gathered by the U.N. teams for military purposes. Washington, in turn, rejects all the Iraqi charges and is determined to have its nationals take an active role in the inspection missions.

The world community, however, is calling for restraint and prudence and not sword rattling. The international community, however, needs to set its priorities in a logical and consistent order. We presume that the U.N. Security Council's first priority is to inspect Iraqi installations to make sure that no weapons of mass destruction are being stored, produced or likely to be produced. On this score there can be no honest disagreement between all sides. How to carry out the necessary inspection and by whom is the main bone of contention between the Council and Iraq. Obviously effective inspection is called for and Iraq cannot object to that. Who shall conduct the required inspection is something that can be agreed upon as long as the principal objective of the inspection remains the main criterion. It is therefore not so important who shall carry the inspection as long as it is done in good faith. This is where Washington does not appear to be on solid grounds. As long as experts from neutral states can carry out the mission, why then insist on making an issue of the participation of U.S. inspectors?

Meanwhile, Iraq should not escalate the tension by threatening to shoot down U.S. surveillance aircraft when it is doubtful that its air defences are so sophisticated and advanced as to pose a serious threat to a U-2 spy plane in any case. The cards are heavily stacked against Iraq and it should not repeat its colossal error committed in 1990 by taking on a formidable power or two. Iraq has acted wisely so far by not expelling the U.S. inspectors. By way of a compromise, we suggest that inspectors from strictly neutral nations be assigned the mandate of conducting the inspection mission. We would propose, therefore, the assigning of inspectors from neutral states of Europe.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan said Qatar is not to blame for hosting the coming Middle East and North Africa economic meeting because it is in no position at all to say no when Egypt, Jordan and Morocco have all hosted similar meetings. Qatar cannot say no and cancel the meeting when it is clear that all Arab states, including the major countries boycotting the meeting, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, could not secure a consensus among Arab states on whether to convene the conference or not, according to the writer. Had Qatar found a firm stand on the part of the member states of the Arab League against the holding of the conference, it would not have gone ahead with plans to prepare for it, Adwan said. He said the key to whether the Arabs should or should not normalise relations with Israel is not in Qatar's hand but rather in the hands of the other, larger, more influential Arab states and those countries which host the U.S. Marines, those which have accepted the role of helping to impose sanctions on Iraq, Libya and Sudan and starve the population of Iraq, and succumbed to the desires and whims of Washington which continues to give orders to the Arabs.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi, said Israel's increased and obvious attention and interest in the health of Yasser Arafat must be causing anxiety and concern to the Palestine National Authority (PNA). Some PNA officials have actually started to predict that the Israelis are showing interest in Arafat's health and drumming up ideas about it as a pretext for a possible assassination attempt on him along the style they used against Khaled Misha'al, said the writer. In fact, the possibility of Israel plotting against Arafat's life is quite logical under the present circumstances in which the Likud government is working hard to destroy the Oslo accords to which Arafat is holding tight, said Rintawi. For many, Arafat's presence at the head of the PNA is an essential element for national unity especially in the absence of institutions that can rally the Palestinians together and in light of the weakness of the fledgling legislative authority and the feeble effects of the present political parties.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Reflections on 'Black Monday'

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

ON "BLACK Monday," October 27, 1997 the stock exchanges around the world collapsed one after another, starting with the Far East and ending in America via Europe. On the very next day the same stock exchanges made unprecedented comebacks starting with America and ending in Europe via the Far East. Thus the ups and downs in capital markets became capable of circling the globe in one day, following the sun from East to West even though no change took place, in either day, regarding the economic fundamentals which no doubt are healthy and strong.

This is of course another manifestation of a new globalisation which the world has already achieved. Under this new state of affairs, the nation-state economies alone are no longer the decisive factors determining the state of the economy and market of a given country. Economies began to influence each other. If a financial crisis erupts, say, in Mexico, it will echo in all Latin American countries, regardless of the economic fundamentals of each country.

Only weeks ago, hard-nosed economists were so sure that whatever happens to the currencies of Southeast Asian countries, which were dubbed Tigers, will by no

means affect the currency of Hong Kong simply because the fundamentals of Hong Kong economy are sound, its budget and balance of payments are in surplus, and the management of the economy is superb. However, all these favourable conditions did not inoculate Hong Kong against what was happening elsewhere in the shaky neighbourhood. The Hong Kong dollar came under immense pressure; its shares plummeted. In general Hong Kong could not withstand the neighbourhood effect.

This new trend of neighbourhood effect comes to compound Jordanian economic problems. It is no longer sufficient to reform our own economy, peg our currency to the strong U.S. dollar at a fixed rate, achieve surpluses in our budget and balance of payments etc. Such achievements are to be commended, but by themselves will not guarantee the flow of foreign investments to Jordan. Simply because the world looks at the Middle East region as a whole. For example, terrorist acts in Egypt affects tourism to Jordan.

Each time the international stock exchanges experience a plunge, our (wise) men ask a silly question about the size of Arab losses. This is a false question, used to

deceive some. If those wise men were honest, they should have asked about the size of Arab profits when prices of foreign stocks were soaring at an average of 20 per cent a year, over and above the current yields. Arab investors in American stocks, for instance, may have lost 7.2 per cent of their wealth on Black Monday, but this is true only if those Arabs bought their shares in the last working day before the crash. But if they acquired the shares at the beginning of 1997 their net capital gain would be 11 per cent by Black Monday's evening even before the market recovery in the same week. If Arab investors were in the market 15 years ago, which is most likely the case, their capital profits would be ten fold or around one thousand per cent of their initial investment in 1982.

To lure Arab funds back to for investment in the Arab World, takes more than deceptions and smart lies. It takes real reform of the investment climate, economically, politically, legally, and administratively.

Once these and other conditions, such as transparency, accountability, and a dependable justice system, are met, not only Arab investments will flow back to the Arab World, but also foreign investors will take note as well.



Dissecting the 'Huntington framework'

By G.H. Jansen

ON OCTOBER 30th-31st some 500 scholars and experts gathered in Nicosia to discuss "Political Islam and the West" at the first international seminar organised by the Centre for World Dialogue, a non-profit, non-aligned organisation founded by the Iranian-born Cypriot businessman, Hussein Aliakhami. Although there are many such meetings held throughout the world today with the aim of promoting Muslim-Christian or East-West dialogue, this was the first to feature Iranian Shia participants from Tehran and the diaspora, both presenting papers and taking part in the dialogue. Among the 40 speakers were mainstream and dissident Iranian personalities, including Ayatollah Mohammed Mojtaba-Shabestary from Tehran University; A'zam Taleghani, an Iranian Shia cleric who put himself forward as a presidential candidate but was banned by the Council of Guardians; and Abdul Karim Saroush, a British-educated progressive Muslim thinker, who has been persecuted by the clerical regime and was able to leave the country only because of the intervention of President Mohammad Khatami, former President Hashemi Rafsanjani and other influential well-wishers.

The papers presented to the seminar were footnotes to the thesis put forward by Harvard University Professor Samuel Huntington in his paper, "Islam and the West: From Conflict to Dialogue." He reiterated his theme of the "inevitable clash" between the two entities, insisting that "for the immediate future the overall relations between the West and Islam are likely to remain in a cold war phase and to be at best acrimonious and to be at worst conflictual and violent."

A similarly combative U.S. view was also put forward by Judith Miller, a senior writer from "The New York Times." Using statistics to prove her point, Ms. Miller asserted that Muslim countries, in their present parious political and economic position, would not and could not catch up with the West, a state of affairs which cannot but provoke antagonism. Ms. Miller emphasised the economic impact on relations over the "civilisational."

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was initially "appalled" by Huntington's "clash" thesis, also made the point that economic competition could be a source of conflict between east and west. But she said this would happen because the east was catching up with and challenging the West.

Most of the 40 scholars presenting

papers challenged Huntington's apocalyptic judgement, challenging the basic idea of "inherent" incompatibility and "inevitable" civilisational conflict.

The Islamic reformer, Dr. Saroush, argued that Islam and Christianity, the predominant religions of the West, had the same philosophic basis and so there should be no "inherent," axiomatic antagonism. This undercut the "civilisational" foundation of the Huntington's thesis.

Professor John Esposito, director of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding in Washington, D.C., observed that the "Huntingtonian framework" did not frame reality or deal with the real causes of tension and potential conflict between Muslims and the West.

Dr. Graham Fuller, a former U.S. Central Intelligence Agency analyst and diplomat now with the Rand Corporation, flatly accused Huntington of confusing cause with effect. Fuller said that the U.S. had no problem with Islamic religious "fundamentalism." Oil and neo-imperialism and U.S. determination to defend its economic and political interests in the West Asian region (among these the total support given to Israel, the enemy of the Arabs) were more likely causes of friction and conflict between Muslim countries and the West than "civilisational" differences and incompatibility.

Huntington's thesis, of course, delights the hearts of the Israelis and their friends who have given the notion of a coming "clash" a great deal of publicity. But, Fuller asserts, perhaps going against the facts, "All is not dark to Islam-U.S. relations because the Jewish lobby in America is not all-powerful."

Professor Enzo Pace of Padua University said the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Islam — antagonistic over the centuries — is now moving towards understanding and, almost, friendship.

Another positive presentation was that of Professor Anatoli Gromyko, president of the Russian Centre for Policy Evaluation (and son of Andrei, the veteran Russian foreign minister) who said that Russia is moving towards accommodation with Islam. Russia is itself part of the Islamic world because it has a large Muslim population of 15 million people, 10 per cent of the Russian population; 800,000 Muslims live in Moscow alone. So Russia cannot, in its own best interests, subscribe to the "clash of civilisations," particularly since Moscow seeks to secure an interest in the oil wealth of the Muslim republics which emerged from the former Soviet Union, 200 billion barrels of oil estimated at \$4 trillion.

Professor Shireen Hunter from the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels said, in her paper on Europe and Islam, that Europe could not afford a "clash" with the Muslim World because the oil on which Europe depends is, after all, Islamic oil. In addition to keeping the oil flowing, Europe's two main objectives were to promote stability in the Muslim countries round the Mediterranean basin so their populations did not emigrate to Europe and to keep militant Islam out of Europe, where Germany has the largest of the continent's Muslim population. Thus, the threat to Europe comes from weak Muslim governments which are unrepresentative of their people and repressive.

Political Islam, she asserted, is not monolithic and if it is and-West that is due to the past history of colonialism. She makes the point that although antagonism between Islam and the West is due to a history of colonial relations in the past, there is no real threat of an attack on Europe from any Muslim source. So there is no need to construct a "fortress Europe" against the Muslim World.

One of the points she made is that military coercion is the mainstay of Muslim governments and also when she gets apologetic towards Israel it is a common European attitude, she claims that Europe has a "moral responsibility" towards Israel though it is difficult to see what is moral in the recent behaviour of the Jewish state towards Muslim Palestinians and its Muslim neighbours.

One of the few and more forceful scholars dissected from Huntington's thesis from an entirely new perspective. This was Professor Reza Sheikholeslami of Wadham College, Oxford, who argued that a clash may come but not because of the inherent differences between the Western and Islamic worlds but because of their many and growing similarities. "We want the same things, independence and economic prosperity." But in this "unipolar world" the U.S. refuses to share power and wealth. Thus, the campaign of underprivileged Muslims who adopt political means to achieve power, status and development, becomes a threat to the U.S. and militant Muslims, "terrorists." Thus, he concluded, the more the "have-nots subscribe to the value systems of the haves, the more threatened do the haves feel." This is true also of other competing "civilisations" than the West and Islam and of relations between rich and poor within most societies.

Deadly litter

Suzanne Ruggi

DELEGATES FROM over 100 nations met at an international conference in Oslo at the end of September and voted for an immediate and total ban on anti-personnel landmines. Nine days later, another Palestinian child was killed and four others injured when a mine exploded as they were playing near the village of Silwad, outside Ramallah. He was the fourth Palestinian child to be killed by a mine in a year.

The conference means nothing to Palestinians for two reasons. They need landmines to be cleared, not just banned. Besides, although Israel has declared a "comprehensive moratorium" on mine planting, it was absent from the conference as it maintains that it needs to preserve the right to use these weapons to defend itself. Twenty-eight Palestinians have been killed and a further 71 injured by various explosive military devices since the beginning of the intifada, according to Israeli human rights group B'tselem. What proportion of these deaths was caused by Jordanian and Israeli military debris is not clear. Some progress was made in clearance after the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreements of 1994, when some minefields planted by Jordan were removed by the Israeli army. Landmines in Palestine are only the icing on a cake packed with military debris. "What's more dangerous is not the minefields but the military training areas where ammunition and explosives have been left behind," says Izz Al Din Ruzzi of Al Haqq. "There are some places which were used for training by the Israeli military and were closed areas, but these areas are not used any more."

"The Jenin area is the main place where minefields are found," says Ruzzi, who is Al Haqq's field worker for the district. "The most dangerous area is the Jordan Valley, which constitutes a fifth of the West Bank. There is lots of live ammunition there, explosives like grenades — you could fill trucks with them. In general, Israel hasn't marked these areas clearly to identify them." Thus the danger of these explosives continues to haunt Palestinian farmers and herders. Two boys from the village of Anza near Jenin died last November when a mine blew up in their faces. Local residents of Anza had said that the Israeli army was carrying out manoeuvres in the area just two days before and that the army's leftovers must therefore have been responsible for the deaths.

This claim was backed by a report issued at the same time by the Committee for the Defence of Land in Tubas. Its chairman, Amr Daraghma, voiced local fears that the Israeli army or settlers were planting new mines. The army, however, reported that the mine was Jordanian. Al Haqq has repeatedly demanded that Israel clear the debris and weapons left behind by army exercises and called for compensation for Palestinian families who have suffered as a result of mine detonation.

The organisation is compiling data for a study on the dangers of leftover military debris to be published towards the end of next year. By then, more Palestinians will probably have been maimed or killed by landmines.

Middle East International

LETTERS

Telling the world

To the Editor:

A CIVILISED and enlightened impression was transmitted by Dr. Mazen Armouti, the official spokesman for the Jordanian 1997 parliamentary elections. Our official spokesman had an essential and influential role in communicating to the whole world the image of our pursuit to a democratic path towards honest and legitimate parliamentary elections.

We must be aware of the importance of the media nowadays, because the world is now becoming a small planet, wherein any local issue is made news in an instant across the oceans. Therefore, our highly qualified spokesman was able to draw a clear, respectable image which would be broadcast to the different nations of the world.

The honest elections of last Tuesday represented the mature democracy of our stable government. Jordanian citizens were given their respected constitutional right. The public opinion, in the form of slips of paper in ballot boxes, was merely the force that shaped our new Parliament.

This decent image of our liberal political life will encourage foreign investments and tourism, and thus result in the growth of our economy.

That is the first phase that will move us into the new era. We count on our Parliament members to follow up and work hard to keep the standards that every Jordanian is looking forward to having.

Basma H. Abu-Hassan
Amman

Features

Flexible law: How Israel bends rules to suit changing needs

By Peretz Kidron
in West Jerusalem

ISRAEL IS indeed, as apologists claim, a "law-abiding" state; but as much as denoting compliance with rigid rules, the term also refers to the enormous ingenuity exercised in bending those rules to changing needs. A glaring example is the case of 17-year-old Samuel Sheinbein. Under legislation instigated by the late Menachem Begin, Israel cannot extradite to a foreign country any person who was an Israeli citizen at the time of the commission of the crime for which he is pursued. The only legal recourse is to try him for the alleged crime before an Israeli court, any sentence to be served in an Israeli prison.

In view of the unambiguous wording of the Israeli law, it looked initially as though the American extradition request had no hope of success — until U.S. congressmen, apparently driven by the public outcry, decided to take a hand in the affair with unabashed threats of delaying or even freezing Israel's annual aid package. The earnestness of the threat was illustrated when a preliminary remission of \$75 million was stalled in congressional committee.

This form of congressional action came as an unpleasant shock in Israel: traditionally, Congress has always been the section of the American political establishment where Israel exercises the greatest clout. Whenever Israeli governments have found themselves in confrontation with the administration, the first reaction of the Israeli embassy in Washington is to recruit friends on Capitol Hill to temper presidential reaction. Finding Congress in the unusual role of arm-twister was, therefore, an ominous development. It was not the immediate stoppage of aid: with foreign reserves of close on \$20 billion and high credit ratings on world financial markets, Israel could easily survive a hopefully brief delay in getting its annual U.S. aid package.

But there is deep concern over the precedent: should the Americans realise how potent the leverage they could exercise on Israel, it might cross their minds to exert similar pressure on matters like the peace process, or Israeli arms sales and other business deals with third parties conflicting with U.S. interests. Urgent cables from the Washington embassy begged for prompt action to ward off the threat.

The matter was now up to cabinet legal adviser Amnon Rubinstein, who plays a key role in approving extradition proceedings. It is unclear whether Rubinstein got explicit instructions from his government bosses; such matters are usually resolved with greater subtlety. Although nominally independent of the political echelons, Rubinstein has long functioned as their pliant and obedient tool: when it became plain to all that denial of the extradition request could have grave repercussions for Israel's relations with its American patrons, there was probably no need for further prompting. After thorough study of the documents, Rubinstein and his team of state attorneys claimed to have found evidence that the murder suspect's father — despite holding an Israeli identity card, despite his military service with the IDF and his subsequent annual registration for reserve duties — is not, after all, an Israeli citizen, and his son is therefore

eligible for extradition.

That finding does not mean that the young man will be handed over automatically, or at an early date. His family have hired former justice minister David Libai to argue their case, and Libai promises to appeal all the way up to the Supreme Court. It could take months or even years before a final decision is reached. But the Israeli government achieved its immediate aim of placating congressional fire with a suitable demonstration of goodwill. If that end has been attained by crude manipulation of Israeli law, nobody seems particularly perturbed. Anything to avoid a head-on confrontation with the Americans.

A similarly gratifying outcome laid to rest another case with an equal potential for political damage. The charge was attempted rape, the plaintiff an Israeli belly-dancer, her alleged assailant: Mohammad Basyuni, Egyptian ambassador to Israel. Needless to say, had the charges been pursued, it would have added a further and undesirable embarrassment to Israeli-Egyptian relations, already bedevilled by conflicting interests, mutual mistrust and disagreements over the peace process. Diplomatic custom would not tolerate a criminal investigation against a serving ambassador: had the case gone any further, Egypt would have been forced to recall Basyuni. Given the current state of bilateral relations, such a step could have entailed a full-scale rupture, further aggravating Israel's isolation in the region.

But such grave consequences were kept from materialising when Israel's legal system again demonstrated its political savvy, again — allegedly — without any nudging from the political echelons. After a two-month investigation kept from the public by a blanket court order forbidding any media publication, State Attorney Edna Arbel held a televised press conference where she dismissed the woman's charges as groundless, arguing Basyuni had done nothing worse than make a rather vigorous pass at her, without force or coercion.

Arbel noted with prudish disapproval that the dancer went to see the ambassador "scantily clad." The implication that the dancer had "asked for it" naturally infuriated feminists, but with such major national interests at stake, that was a minor irritant. Israeli officials apologised to Basyuni for the harassment he had endured, including vociferous picketing by racist hardliners, and the ambassador gracefully declared the episode closed.

Courtship dances

Arbel's prim comments on "The Case of the Ambassador and the Belly-Dancer" may have been influenced by quasi-sexual conduct dominating the domestic political arena. Inter-party relations increasingly resemble a ritual dance, where various groups and figures swoop and turn in complex advances and retreats, clicking heels and twirling fans in a mysterious courtship ritual. At the focus stands Benjamin Netanyahu, one moment drawing the dancers with irresistible force, the next scattering them in panic-stricken flight. The dancers weave to and fro, looking around for new partners, dodging, twisting and teasing — only to return to the inescapable Netanyahu.

With the possible exception of Golda Meir in the immediate wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, no prime minister has ever been held in



Benjamin Netanyahu, a Likud Party leader and member of the Knesset, gestures to deputies during a 1994 debate in the Israeli parliament (AFP photo)

such uncoincidental contempt as Netanyahu. Surrounded by endless scandal and controversy, under a constant media barrage, mistrusted by his ministers and coalition partners — Netanyahu seems to have little hope of survival to the end of his four-year term.

Under other circumstances, his foes and critics from the opposition would have allied themselves with the opposition to vote him from office. But that has yet to happen: Israel's first directly elected prime minister is legally immune to anything but the most powerful onslaught. Furthermore, any move to topple him could threaten cherished partisan interests.

Torn between these conflicting forces, the coalition parties seek a "safe" middle way whereby Netanyahu would be rendered harmless, without damage to themselves or the interests they represent. The most obvious path is a "government of national unity" with the opposition Labour Party joining the present coalition and receiving key portfolios, to act as a restraining influence. Even if moves to that end ultimately prove fruitless, the various coalition factions are careful to cover their bets, hoping that their overtures in that direction will improve their status within the administration and bring them some minor gains whereby they could reassure constituents that sticking with Netanyahu has paid off.

The result is a never-ending procession of politicians coming and going for meetings simultaneously informal and well publicised. An intimate of Foreign Minister David Levy has dinner with a senior Labour figure: both deny any political intent, but rumours are promptly launched that Levy and his followers are being offered a number of safe slots on the Labour slate if they walk out on the present coalition. Levy adds his muscle with equally well reported "unofficial" declarations of disgust with Netanyahu. This manoeuvring may foreshadow a Levy walk-out; equally, he could decide after all to stay in the government if he is offered concessions, whether in the form of jobs for his followers or "social" concessions in the upcoming 1998 budget.

On another front, the internal security minister, Avigdor Kabilani, holds sporadic meetings with the Labour leadership, unabashedly promoting efforts by his Third Way party to instigate a national unity government. Here too, the feelers could presage the party's return to the ranks of Labour — or hopes of leverage against its religious rivals in the present government.

For its part, the Labour opposition is going all-out to woo coalition parties in the hope of ejecting Netanyahu before the year 2000. Labour leader Ehud Barak has failed hitherto

to make much of an impact with public opinion, but he is steadfastly pursuing his strategy of attacking Likud bastions in the Mizrahi middle class. Having publicly apologised on behalf of the Labour leadership "throughout the generations" for the humiliations to which the Labour governments of the 1950s subjected Middle Eastern immigrants, Barak is making all-out efforts to avoid clashes with the religious parties, whose pivotal position could decide the next election.

Shas' cross flirting

His particular objective is the Orthodox Shas Party, whose blend of religious piety with social ardour in defence of these communities has elevated it into a powerful and growing electoral force. At the recently concluded festival of Succoth, Barak visited Shas spiritual mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, scheduled as a brief courtesy call according to the festive custom, the visit extended into long and earnest conversation which promptly set the political community abuzz with rumour.

Nobody can rival Shas and its dynamic lay leader, Aryeh Deri, in taking advantage of such a situation. Deri knows that a Shas walk-out would bring down the Netanyahu government, and he knows that Netanyahu knows it. Equally, he knows that Barak knows he has no hope of gaining power at the next election without Shas' support. With two such eligible swains competing for its favours, no wonder that Shas is behaving like a cross flirt, flinging smiles first in one direction, then the other — and hastening to submit the reckoning. The dowry demanded includes a couple of religious laws that Netanyahu and Barak are each reluctant to grant, for fear that the provisions consolidating Orthodox control of religious life in Israel will offend the powerful Reform and Conservative movements in the U.S.

But while the two modernist movements exercise considerable clout in the Jewish diaspora, they dispose of very few votes in Israel itself. In consequence, bets are on that the controversial legislation — or some equivalent — will ultimately be carried through the Knesset by a bizarre coalition of Likud and Labour, while Shas and the other Orthodox parties sit back beaming. And of course, the Netanyahu government will come through unscathed.

President Ezer Weizman has put off an official visit to China, scheduled for December. The postponement was on unspecified "political grounds." Weizman aides told journalists that the president has two main reasons for wishing to remain in Israel at that time: to secure his reelection for a second term; and to be on hand for the collapse of the Netanyahu government which he expects at the end of the year. Political observers recognise Weizman's legitimate concern at holding on to his present office. But insofar as being around to witness Netanyahu's downfall, many observers believe he may find himself kicking his heels to no purpose. For all its apparent fragility, the Netanyahu government has more staying power than meets the eye. The present courtship dance could easily extend till the year 2000, or even further.

Middle East International

Britain's greatest thinker, who straddled a terrible century

EVEN WITHOUT the academic accomplishments which adorned it, Isaiah Berlin's was a life that encapsulated a century — from an early childhood in Riga and St. Petersburg to England and Oxford, to Washington and then back to Moscow as a diplomat, then Oxford once more, and the summits of the English establishment as a director of the Royal Opera House, and the presidency of the British Academy.

But he will be best remembered for two things: his scholarship and his ability to communicate his scholarship. In Berlin three strands wondrously fused: a Russian fascination with ideas, a sense of community derived from his Jewish origins, and a devotion to tolerance, the dignity of the individual, and freedom taken from his adopted country of England. And for those who knew him and studied under him, his finest pulpit was the lecture rooms of postwar Oxford.

Isaiah Berlin was the university's in-house legend, a Pavarotti at the rostrum of learning, a multilingual, multidisciplinary force of nature. For those who listened to him, the memory is indelible — the glittering, tumbling torrent of words as speech struggled to keep up with the Catherine wheel of ideas that was his mind. He was once measured at 400 words a minute, twice the normal rate. Whether it was total enlightenment or inspired obfuscation was debatable. "Unintelligible in several languages," Al Rowse once remarked, only



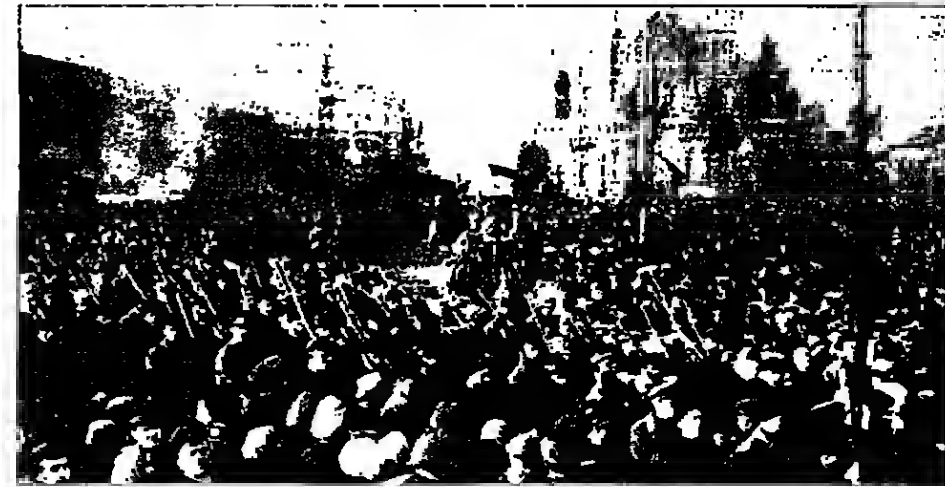
The life of Isaiah Berlin, pictured with Sir Yehudi Menuhin (right), encapsulated a century, from the Russian revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall (AP photos)

part in jest. But the sheer sweep and wit of the man, the richness and originality of his mind, made you feel, it only for an instant, that suddenly everything was clear.

Berlin has not escaped revisionism's barbs. For today's philosophy students he is no longer required reading. So, some start to wonder, was he really a unique genius? Or was he

merely an inflated Oxford cult figure, a Grade One listed monument of the high table, unique only in that gift the English intelligentsia prize above every other — of holding forth at the drop of a hat, effortlessly, authoritatively and humorously, about any subject, under the sun? He could do that — and how. But he was not just clever. He was also wise.

He offered a remarkable combination of historian and philosopher, a student of ideas who also shaped ideas. Berlin is famous above all as a liberal. You did not have to be an aspiring historian or philosopher to have read his 1959 essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" and be disquieted and enthralled by the distinction drawn between "freedom from" and "freedom to" —



the one the justificatory claim of the Communist which he loathed, the other all too easily a licence to tyrannise.

Today, the "Two Concepts" is less admired, and Berlin himself admitted in his last published interview, in last month's issue of Prospect magazine, that "I should have made more of the horrors of negative liberty, and all that has led to."

No one, however, would challenge the central lesson he drew from "this most terrible century in Western history," that nothing was as dangerous as blind pursuit of a political or philosophical system. He had seen these evils at first hand: the overthrow of Tsar Nicholas II and Lenin's coup, as a child in St. Petersburg, and the ebb and flow of the World War II from the

British embassy in Washington. Famously, his dispatches were some of Churchill's favourite wartime reading.

Above all, perhaps, he recognised that in an imperfect world good was divisible, that noble intentions often conflicted, that the most intractable disputes are where both contestants are right. From that flowed a special skill, of illuminat-

ing each side of an argument. He was a mesmerising raconteur — but "at the opposite extreme from those... who use their gifts to monopolise the conversation," wrote the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. "Berlin's splendid performances enable us to listen more intelligently to other voices, not just to his own. How much we owe him."

How much indeed. More conclusively than any other, he proved that playfulness, laughter and a sense of fun could survive a fellowship of All Souls at the age of 23. He was, wrote his biographer, Michael Ignatieff, "the rarest of creatures, a wise man who is also lovable."

All this will make him irreplaceable. Each generation throws up just a handful like him: Andre Malraux, George Kennan, John Maynard Keynes are a few names which come to mind.

We should be thankful that this particularly curating specimen fetched up on our shores. England, he once said, "is the best country in the world: the least corrupt, the least cruel, the least liable to enormities." Pace the trumpeting of New Labour, these days this self-doubting country tends not to see itself so. Let us therefore return the compliment. Berlin's favourite quotation is a line by Immanuel Kant: "From the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made." If that is true, then no one was more adept at explaining and ironing out the twists, gnarls and contortions of our era than he.

LETTERS

ing the world

New deputies seen lacking necessary economic expertise

By Issam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Observers said Saturday that the members of the 13th Parliament have limited economic experience, far less than the members of the former Parliament.

They added that a heavy agenda of economic issues, such as Euro-Jordanian partnership agreement and the 1998 fiscal budget will pose heavy responsibilities on the newly-elected deputies who lack enough experience to tackle economic and financial issues.

With the exception of few deputies, especially the incumbent Ali Abul Ragheb who was a former minister of trade, industry and supply and who helped in the economic reforms, the observers said the members of the new Parliament have

less economic weight and awareness than their former colleagues.

They said that the 13th Parliament will be facing a tough experience when its members will discuss and review several essential economic issues and projects including the 1998 fiscal budget.

"The agenda of the Parliament is overloaded and requires economic expertise in order to tackle such domestic economic issues," said some observers.

The other exceptions who have good economic knowledge are former minister of water and irrigation, transport and agriculture Samir Kawar and former Minister of Supply Munir Sobar.

The other new deputies in the Parliament who can cooperate with the three former ministers mentioned

above are Hussein Atiyyeh, Ahmad Al Khattab and Mansour Ben Tarif, a former minister of agriculture.

The observers expect that the six newly-elected members will have to create a suitable climate for the private sector to play a pivotal role on the internal and external levels.

They are also expected to accelerate the processes of joining the World Trade Organisation as well as the Free Arab Market.

"It is expected that the parliamentary discussions of the draft fiscal budget in the coming sessions will focus on deputies' demands to extend services to various constituencies rather than thoroughly examining the financial picture of the Kingdom," said the observers.

FAO chief warns of growing gap between rich and poor

ROME (R) — The director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned Saturday that shrinking development aid meant the gap between wealthy and poor nations was bound to widen.

Jacques Diouf urged delegates attending the FAO's 29th governing conference not to cut the agency's budget if they wanted to see top priority projects maintained.

"Development aid continues to dwindle in real terms, having hovered at a nominal \$60 billion in recent years. Aid to the agriculture sector plunged from \$16 billion in 1988 to \$10 billion in 1995," Mr. Diouf said in a speech.

"The gap between rich and poor can only widen under such conditions, both within and between countries," he added.

The biennial FAO conference opened Friday and will discuss the state of food and agriculture in the world over the next two weeks. It will also decide the coming two-year budget for the Rome-based agency.

Mr. Diouf proposed that delegates from the 175

member nations should increase FAO's budget to \$675.3 million over the next two years from \$650 million in 1996-97.

This would represent zero real growth, he said, and would allow the FAO to pursue a wide range of projects — from the control of diseases to early warning of food shortages, from management of genetic resources to continued field operations.

If the conference decided instead to freeze funds at present levels "despite all efforts to the contrary, only some of these priority areas could be maintained," Mr. Diouf said.

"FAO's budget is just over two days' consumption of tobacco in North America and less than two months' consumption of champagne in one European country," he told the conference.

"Where then does the fight against the hunger of 800 million human beings fit in the scale of priorities of the affluent?" he asked.

Despite the huge numbers of undernourished people around the world, FAO estimated that food aid declined 37 per cent in 1996/97 to just 4.9 million

tonnes of cereal — the lowest level since the start of food aid programmes in the 1950s.

A special world food summit held in Rome last year pledged to halve the number of chronically hungry and malnourished by the year 2015.

"(Achieving this) calls for more than speeches, seminars, studies and consultants' reports," he said, adding that the FAO had created special food security programmes in 24 countries with similar operations about to start up in a further 42.

Mr. Diouf said acute tensions seen on the food commodity markets in 1995 and 1996 had been largely absorbed by good harvests in 1996. "Yet many countries continue to face difficulties and early estimates for 1997 indicate a rise in world agriculture output of only 1.1 per cent."

The FAO director general said "food-deficit" countries faced huge problems over high import costs and warned that several developing countries risked being marginalised because of hefty debt burdens.

China will need more oil imports

BEIJING (AFP) — China's oil production is not growing fast enough to meet the demands of its accelerating economy and will need more imports in future years, a senior official has admitted.

Speaking at the 15th World Petroleum Congress in Beijing, Wang Tao, a senior adviser to the China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) and congress organiser, said: "The growth of oil production in China is no longer matching economic development."

Since 1993 China has been a net importer of oil, and last year imports accounted for eight per cent of domestic consumption, said Mr. Wang, a former head of the CNPC.

China would need 195 million tonnes of oil by 2000 and 265 tonnes by 2010, Mr. Wang told the congress of some 4,300 delegates from 88 countries.

"We will keep on developing ties with some countries for oil imports," he said. "The Chinese petroleum community would like

to strengthen cooperation with its neighbouring countries."

Even if China could add to last year's production of 157 million tonnes, "no-one abroad thinks they will be able to ever get past 170 million tonnes," one official at a major European oil firm based here said.

Mr. Wang said China would have to continue forging links with oil-producing nations along the lines of the \$9.5 billion deal signed last month with Kazakhstan for the exploration of an oilfield close to the Caspian Sea.

China has also concluded deals with Iraq, Peru, Venezuela and Sudan, and has signed an agreement with U.S. giant Exxon Corp. for the development of a refinery in the south-eastern province of Fujian.

"Looking ahead to the 21st century, China desires, on the principle of equality and mutual benefit, to develop further the cooperative relations with the world oil industry," Mr. Wang told the congress.

try's facing many new technical challenges," he said, adding that "international technical exchanges should be made and emphasised as a way to find new solutions."

Most areas in the oil-rich east of China have problems, such as large amounts of water amid layers of oil. China was ready to seek flexible methods of international cooperation to solve such problems, Mr. Wang said.

But it is reporting new finds all the time. On Monday, the official Xinhua news agency said a new oilfield, with an expected daily output of some 1,000 tonnes of crude, was discovered in the South China Sea, some 140 kilometres south of Hong Kong.

China estimates its reserves at around 69.4 billion tonnes, about a quarter of which have been verified.

Three-quarters of its production comes from the east of the country, while reserves in the northwest province of Xinjiang are slowly being exploited.

High oil prices keep surplus in UAE balance of payments

ABU DHABI (AFP) — a surge in oil prices in 1996 maintained a surplus in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) balance of payments despite a sharp increase in cash outflow, an official report has showed.

The surplus stood at 2.28 billion dirhams (\$621 million), slightly lower than the 1995 surplus of 2.78 billion dirhams (\$757 million), according to the quarterly bulletin of the central bank.

A breakdown showed the decline was caused mainly by a sharp rise in government and private cash trans-

fers to 22.18 billion dirhams (\$604 billion) in 1996 from 15.88 billion dirhams (\$432 billion) in 1995.

Private transfers, which include mostly remittances by the large foreign community in the oil-producing Gulf country, grew to 12.27 billion dirhams (\$334 billion) from 11.79 billion dirhams (\$321 billion).

Experts said the balance of payments, a key indicator of economic health, remained in surplus because of a large rise in the income caused by a surge in oil prices to nearly \$20 in

1996 from \$16.8 in 1995.

The report showed the value of crude exports soared to 54 billion dirhams (\$14.7 billion) from 44.59 billion dirhams (\$12.14 billion).

Gas sales, mostly to Japan, also increased to 6.2 billion dirhams (\$1.68 billion) from 5.5 billion dirhams (\$1.49 billion).

The surge in crude sales boosted the UAE's total exports to 121.9 billion dirhams (\$33.2 billion) in 1996 from 107.3 billion dirhams (\$29.23 billion) in 1995.

Despite higher imports, the surplus in the trade balance widened to nearly 26.9 billion dirhams (\$7.32 billion) from 21.1 billion dirhams (\$5.74 billion).

The figures showed return from the UAE's overseas investments rose slightly to around 18 billion dirhams (\$4.9 billion) from 17.48 billion dirhams (\$4.76 billion). It did not mention the size of those investments.

The UAE produces around 2.16 million barrels per day of oil under a quota assigned by the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Its crude-oil wealth of around 98 billion barrels accounts for nearly 10 per cent of the world's total recoverable oil reserves.

Abu Shaqra Trading Establishment Mark The 36th Anniversary

Mr. Rami Abu Shaqra held a press conference on Saturday at the Abu Shaqra Exhibition Centre — Gardens Street branch — attended by representatives of the media. During the press conference there was a lottery drawing on the Abu Shaqra competition organised to mark the 36th anniversary of the Abu Shaqra Trading Establishment.

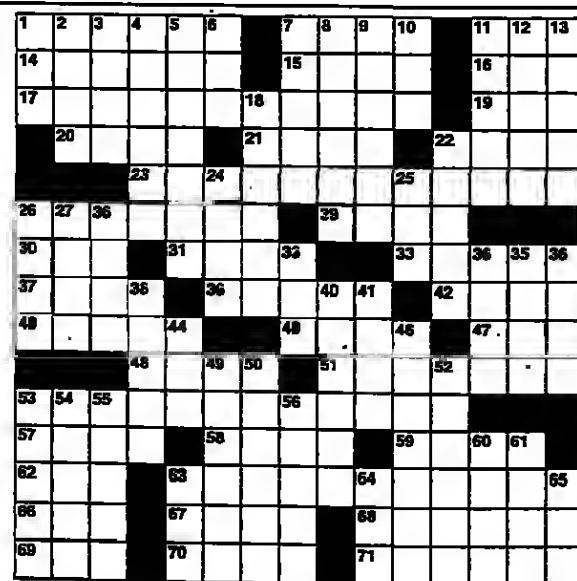
The lottery drawing was held in the presence of Mr. George Kern, agent of the Swiss Taj Hower Watches.

The result was as follows:

- First prize JD500 was won by Khalifeh Salim Al Kufuf.
 - The second prize JD300 was won by Khader Ibrahim Abu Diger.
 - The third prize JD200 was won by Zeinab Mohammad Suleiman Abu Sedreh.
- Congratulations.

THE Daily Crossword

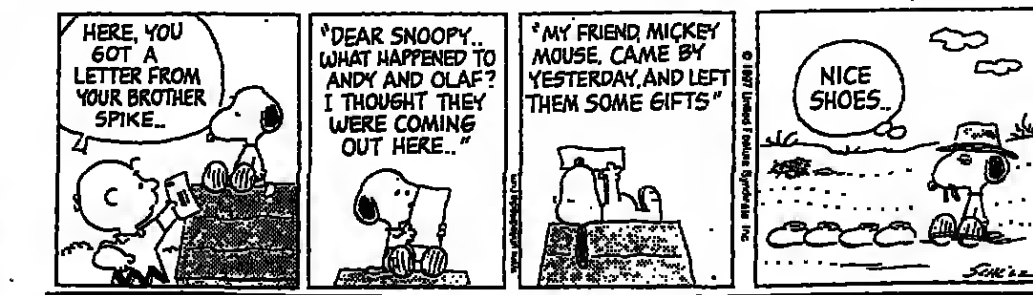
- ACROSS
- Exert caution
 - Imkeeper, for one
 - First name in Follies
 - P.L.O. head
 - Aware of
 - Fate
 - "The Piano" address
 - ABA member: abbr.
 - Criticize harshly
 - Type of tide
 - Runa del
 - Revolutionary War heroine
 - Yeraven is its capital
 - Chemical compound
 - Big name in China
 - Physicians, briefly
 - Conday's victim
 - Stravinsky or Sikorsky
 - Snug retreats
 - Tractable
 - Mister in Baroque
 - Waste allowance
 - Truck
 - Writer, Anita
 - "... — pennies from Heaven"
 - "Beggars' Opera" heroine
 - Folk singer Burl
 - City oasis
 - Sound of distress
 - Energy
 - "Barnaby Rudge" character
 - Lennon's widow
 - Words of understanding
 - "Home was not built"
 - Decade
 - Beatty classic
 - "For better than never" (Chaucer)



by Matthew Higgins

- DOWN
- Exclamation of contempt
 - God of love
 - Barrier
 - Glowing
 - Burn or Chandler
 - African land: abbr.
 - Sweetie
 - Recorded
 - Intervene
 - Rocky hill
 - "London, for one"
 - City of the stars
 - Weasel's activity
 - Loosen
 - Conspicuous success
 - Celebrity
 - Turkey type
 - Author Kingsley
 - Fad
 - Planet's satellite
 - Jet
 - Shankar of music
 - "Unanimously"
 - Some bills
 - Registers
 - Difficult
 - Adam's son
 - Rogers or Clark
 - Bess and Harry
 - Tidy
 - 49 Go against
 - Made binding
 - Unprincipled
 - Key position
 - Sheeplike
 - Dud
 - City on the Phone
 - Egyptian lizard
 - Tidy
 - ENE, e.g.
 - Seven
 - Funny Louis

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) — Intuition and emotion prevail over logic and reason. There's a hidden variable in the equation. It has something to do with luck or fate or miracles. Everything you see is not everything there is. To get the answers, you're going to have to follow a hunch.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) — Did you know that talking about what you want is an important part of making it happen? You might find out something you overlooked. By putting out the idea before it's fully formulated, you end up with a better idea. Do this with people you love and trust.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) — There are things that need to be replaced, like, say, the vacuum cleaner. But you'd rather buy toys. Talk to your roommates about the best to spend the money, then do it. Be careful to get the best deal. Don't act on impulse, because it's going to leave you a long time.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) — It's a great day for romance, travel and making plans for the future. You've been taking care of business lately. You've been discussing important matters and you've gotten a lot of them handled by now. Today you should just relax and have a fabulous time with the one you love.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) — It's another good day to go shopping for gifts. Take a Piscean friend with you. Pisceans always know exactly what that other person will like. It's not too early to shop for the holidays. Get some of these things checked off your list so you'll have more time to play later.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) — You're learning a lot about non-verbal communication. You're picking up on the nuances and the vibes around you. You can tell what other people want, even if they don't come right out and tell you. Today, you'll find an opportunity to practise these skills.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) — Emotions rule the day. Since you are analytical, you might feel hampered. Just watch and listen. Look for clues and hints. The work you do today could bring in lots of money. You'd do very well at a crafts show, for example. People are in the mood to buy beautiful things.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) — It's a marvelous day for playing with children. The kids will be coming up with fabulous ideas. Storytelling will be lots of fun. You'll not only be teaching the children, you'll be learning important things yourself, such as how to be more childlike.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) — It's a good day for entertaining at home. Your energy level is not high, however. You're being pushed to finish things and make decisions you've been avoiding. That's very difficult for you, so you may be kind of exhausted by now. Have mellow friends over.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) — Sometimes you have a tendency to be brusque with people. Today, that won't be the case. You'll be warm and patient and understanding. People around you will flourish as a result of the attention. Help everyone have a marvellous afternoon. Get them involved in doing something fun.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) — Is someone trying to make you feel bad because you didn't call or visit? You can either humour the person or get upset. The choice is up to you. Or you could just do what you're asked. It means more to the other person than it does to you anyway.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) — You are always interested in taking care of others. During the coming weeks, you'll find it even more fun than usual. You might even fall in love with someone you meet in process. So make sure you're hanging around with the right crowd. True love could be the result.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

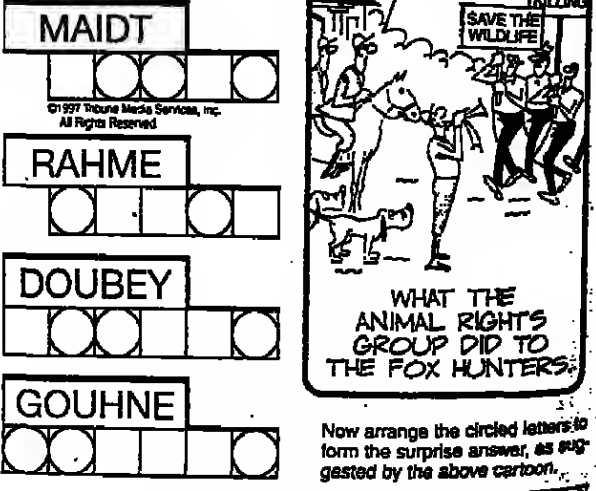
THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"You whine too much when you're sick. When I had laryngitis, you never heard me complain!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four and many words.



Answer here: MAID RAHM DOUB GOUGH

Daily Business Beat
A review of news from the Arabic press

Industrial Development Bank doubles capital to JD24m, to distribute half share as free bonus

THE GENERAL assembly of the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) has approved, in an extraordinary meeting, doubling the bank's capital from JD12 million to JD24 million. The increase would come from the capitalisation of around JD6 million voluntary reserves by granting half a share free bonus to shareholders for every share they hold.

The remaining amount will be raised through offering prime shares for private subscription, the largest portion of which will be for strategic shareholders. They will include the Social Security Corporation buying 2.4 million shares, the European Investment Bank getting two million shares and the Jordanian government taking 690,000 shares. About 0.9 million shares will be open to the shareholders for subscription.

IDB General Manager Rajab Al Saad indicated that foreign equity was very minimal but such an equity will be between ten and eleven per cent when the European Investment Bank enters as a strategic partner. He referred to other investments, such as the provision fund of the United Nations staff and the Qatari government, but noted that they are weak. He attributed the weak Arab

Banks given approval to capitalise reserves and retained earnings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Securities Commission Board (SCB) has given its consent to requests by the Jordan Bank and the Jordan Islamic Bank to increase their capital by capitalising voluntary reserves and retained earnings.

A SCB statement said that the two banks can make the transfer after paying the required fees as stipulated by the SCB law.

The SCB has also given its consent to a number of companies to list their shares in the parallel market after meeting the requirements in accordance with article eight of the parallel market's regulations.

These companies are: The United Glass Industries Company, the International Company for Optical and Hearing, NutriDar, the International Company for Medical Investment, the Jordan Specialised Investment Company, the

First Mercedes assembled in Mideast hits road in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — The first Mercedes E-200 saloon car assembled in the Middle East hit the road Saturday in Egypt, as part of a joint venture between German technology and cheap Egyptian labour.

Eleven of the 2,500 cars which will be produced annually in Egypt rolled off the assembly

line at a ceremony attended by senior officials from Daimler-Benz AG and its Egyptian partners NATCO and Egyptian German Automotive (EGA).

"Each year we sell 1,000 Mercedes cars, including 700 of the E-200 class, but by assembling them here now we will raise sales by 250 per cent," Zakariya Makary, marketing director at NATCO, told AFP.

Asian bank crisis could last 7 years — Goldman Sachs

SINGAPORE (R) — Asia's banking crisis could last as long as seven years if the proper corrective measures are not taken, the head of Asia Banking Investment Research at U.S. investment bank Goldman Sachs has said.

Roy Ramos told a news conference many Asian banks were fragile with a high proportion of bad loans, poor regulation and significant unhedged exposure to fluctuating currencies.

The crisis in Thailand has already led to the suspension of more than 30 finance houses and many of Thailand's banks are under close scrutiny.

Mr. Ramos said banks and financial authorities across the region needed to recognise the scale of the problem

and respond with a range of measures, including tighter regulations, keeping spending and borrowing in check and monitoring credit risks carefully.

"If authorities and banks do all these things, recovery will come in one, two or three years," Mr. Ramos said.

"If the right measures are not taken, this could well be a five to seven year recovery," he added.

"In Thailand, the past few weeks have been disappointing," he said, arguing that the scale of the financial and banking crisis in the country had not been recognised until too late.

"Part of the problem in Thailand was that there was a denial of the problem and procrastination," he said.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 8/11/97 18:32

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.7100	0.5927	1.3950	124.25	1.4085	1677.80	1.9245
DE Mark	0.5848	1.0000	0.8157	72.85	0.8234	980.88	1.1254
GB Sterling	1.6872	2.8860	1.0000	209.52	2.3764	2630.78	3.2470
CH Franc	0.7168	1.2254	0.4246	88.05	1.0093	1202.29	138.02
JP Yen	0.0080	1.3757	0.4767	1.1223	1.1331	13.50	154.83
CA Dollar	0.7100	1.2112	0.4183	0.9837	1.13	1187.46	1.3622
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0187	0.3530	0.0831	0.8391	11.47	134.04
FR Franc	0.5196	0.8833	0.3078	72.47	0.7317	871.58	2.9886
FR Franc	0.1750	0.2991	0.1037	24.4030	0.2464	33.57	33.6700

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.7100	0.5927	1.3950	124.25	1.4085	1677.80	1.9245
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	0.7085	0.5703	0.3770	0.36405	0.3672	1.5255
Saudi Riyal	0.2698	0.1889	0.1500	0.097	0.0808	0.98	406.77
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.3794	0.9483	0.6038	9.74	4046.63	9.0204
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1946	0.1500	0.097	0.0808	0.98	406.77
Kuwait Dinar	3.3003	2.3383	1.2372	1.2442	12.01	5034.65	0.9341
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	0.1500	0.097	0.0808	0.98	406.77
Lebanese L1000	0.66	0.4644	0.24584	0.2471	2.3864	0.1986	2.4075
Egyptian	0.2941	0.2084	0.11029	0.1109	1.0708	0.0891	1.0800

Energy

Commodity	Unit	Price
Brent	19.33	19.06
WTI	20.77	20.43
Bonny	19.33	19.06
Dubai	18.75	18.65
UL Gas	193.00	180.00

Metal Prices

Metal	Unit	Price
Gold (oz's)	310	310.5
Silver (oz's)	4.86	4.88
Platinum (oz's)	391	393
Al (3 Months)	1620	1623
CU (3 Months)	1960	1965
Zinc (3 Months)	1190	1195
Lead (3 Months)	590	595
Ni (3 Months)	6260	6270

Energy

Commodity	Unit	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	145.67	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1641	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	303.8	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	25.78	Spot
Tea (c/kg)	156	Spot
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	400	Spot

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 08/11/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
346,000	245,000	ARAB BANK	15.0	1.22	3	360	118320	329.00	327.00	2.00
2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	22	8118	14650	1.81	1.81	0.00
5,800	4,100	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	10.3	3.00	2	4350	21750	5.10	5.00	0.10
3,600	2,100	BANK OF JORDAN	5.0	0.00	2	654	1923	2.95	2.94	0.01
1,190	890	MID. EAST INV. BK.	72.3	0.00	1	5000	5500	1.12	1.10	0.02
2,600	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.4	6.04	13	7500	19443	2.58	2.59	0.01
5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.88	2	5050	25250	5.10	5.00	0.10
4,180	2,440	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	11.8	0.00	19	33117	77200	3.28	3.32	0.04
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	0.09	1	500	385	7.79	7.77	0.02
3,970	3,450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	15.1	0.00	2	3500	12344	3.97	3.97	0.00
4,050	3,430	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.4	3.38	30	12973	46054	3.83	3.55	0.28
1,900	870	BEIT AL-KHAYR (BEITNA)	6	16.48	6	900	822	9.93	9.81	0.12
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
1,740	1,200	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	9.3	0.00	3	1000	1290	1.35	1.28	0.07
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.1	5.29	11	4550	9308	1.89	1.89	0.00
4,030	1,320	IBJO ELECTRICITY	19.8	3.45	1	50	167	3.33	3.33	0.00
1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	4	1250	1445	1.18	1.15	0.03
8,900	6,700	ALBA	14.9	6.02	6	350	2897	8.42	8.30	0.12
1,740	1,150	MID. EAST HOTELS	20.0	0.00	3	2500	3275	1.32	1.31	0.01
3,900	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.8	0.00	4	550	2004	3.63	3.68	0.05
1,100	500	ZAKA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	1200	1149	1.94	1.93	0.01
2,230	1,630	UNITED CO.	8.3	6.32	1	450	435	1.74	1.74	0.00
950	640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	1	400	292	7.75	7.73	0.02
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
4,450	3,030	JOR. CENTRAL FACT.	21.0	3.53	54	35350	109510	3.08	3.12	0.04
4,140	3,000	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.7	2.86	12	51784	181240	3.50	3.50	0.00
7,050	5,570	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.7	3.16	4	5150	35322	6.25	6.33	0.08
11,160	9,070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.5	8.18	2	104	1131	11.00	10.87	0.13
3,260	1,330	INDUSTRIAL CORP. AGR.	9	0.00	3	279	388	1.37	1.40	0.03
7,150	5,800	JOR. SODIUM MILLS	10.6	3.03	3	160	1060	6.65	6.60	0.05
4,700	3,040	ARAB PAPER. MANF.	11.6	4.76	19	4991	20844	4.19	4.20	0.01
1,750	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	14.4	6.90	1	300	348	1.17	1.16	0.01
6,000	4,300	DAR ALBAHJA. OV. INV.	13.9	4.39	1	200	1138	5.65	5.69	0.04
3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.42	11	7400	17914	2.42	2.40	0.02
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	2	1000	470	4.8	4.7	0.1
1,330	700	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	1050	735	7.0	7.0	0.00
1,770	510	NATIONAL INOS.	9	0.00	2	1000	555	5.7	5.5	0.2
1,200	510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	8	5400	2808	5.2	5.2	0.00
2,970	1,450	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	12.7	7.09	4	800	465	6.2	6.2	0.00
3,000	1,980	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	31.3	0.00	1	100	195	1.98	1.95	0.03
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEN.	16.3	5.47	10	2736	3521	1.28	1.28	0.00
1,400	800	KAWTHER INVEST.	63.1	0.00	3	350	351	1.68	1.64	0.04
1,880	1,080	UNIV. HORM. INVS.	17.0	0.00	73	51250	91810	1.68	1.68	0.00
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.9	0.00	8	4300	3757	8.8	8.7	0.1
2,090	1,340	EL - SAY READY WEAR	50.7	0.00	3	220	316	1.44	1.44	0.00
1,310	1,030	INTEL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	8	3650	4385	1.22	1.20	0.02
810	710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	6	7900	6004	7.76	7.76	0.00
840	570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.1	17.24	15	20900	12316	5.9	5.8	0.1
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
46,100	32,000	INDEX: 116.57	CHNG: +0.66	259	207324	464924				
GRAND TOTAL										
170,35	120,35	INDEX: 170.35	CHNG: -0.12	400	291546	830824				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 08/11/1997										
610	380	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	12	23450	8909	3.9	3.8	0.1
800	660	UNION INV. CO.	9	0.00	5	5050	1313	7.7	7.6	0.1
570	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	8	19500	7800	4.1	4.0	0.1
950	720	AL-SABAQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	2	1000	820	8.8	8.2	0.6
750	400	NATL. MTL. ENG. NAMCO	9	0.00	23	48150	19496	1.42	1.40	0.02
660	580	MID. EAST PHARM. 752	9	0.00	5	20600	8034	6.5	6.4	0.1
1,400	860	UNION TOBACCO 752	9	0.00	1	250	240	1.20	1.21	0.01
730	550	RALI PHARM.	9	0.00	1	550	341	1.62	1.62	0.00
470	290	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	2	3000	930	3.1	3.1	0.00
820	590	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	1	100	62	6.3	6.2	0.1
1,000	600	NAT. ALUMINUM. 752	93.2	0.00	6	1750	735	6.7	6.7	0.00
1,020	720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	49.7	0.00	12	13300	13752	1.00	1.03	0.03
GRAND TOTAL										
78	136700					67277				

Mercedes began building its assembly plant in the industrial October 1996 with the joint venture costing 60 million pounds (\$18 million) in paid up capital and a total investment of 180 million pounds (\$53 million).

The environment friendly plant uses recycled water and air-filtered equipment and can be expanded to produce 10,000 units annually if two assembly lines are operated round-the-clock.

It employs 250 Egyptian workers, including 45 engineers, and five German experts.

"Ninety-eight per cent of the Egyptian employees have already worked in the car industry in Egypt or abroad and are assisted by 15 German experts who make frequent visits here," Stiefried said.

Forty per cent of the spare parts are also produced in Egypt in line with Mercedes-Benz guidelines. "The security measures of the car assembled in Egypt are identical to those in Germany," Stiefried said.

Ever since it hit the roads in Egypt, the E-200 class has been nicknamed here "Uyun" (eyes in Arabic) because of the round shape of its headlights.

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Williams and McLaren accused of race-fixing

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Sudan peace talks end without an agreement

NAIROBI (AFP) — Peace talks between the Khartoum regime and southern Sudanese rebels ended in failure in Nairobi Friday after 10 days, sources close to the conference said.

The conference — the first face-to-face meeting between the two sides in three years — explored proposals to end Sudan's 14-year-old civil war, which is estimated to have cost a million lives in Africa's highest country.

"There was no agreement," a rebel source told Agence France Presse shortly after the representatives of the Khartoum regime of President Omar Al Bashir and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) abandoned mediation by Kenyan Foreign Minister Kalonzo Musyoka.

The main stumbling block, sources said, was the SPLA's determination to link its demands to those of its northern dissident allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The SPLA wants to see a confederation and an end to Islamic Sharia law, while the NDA's priority is greater democracy in Sudan as a whole.

While Khartoum was prepared to compromise on the religious issue, it balked on the issue of a confederation, which would give wide powers to the south.

Instead, the regime's dele-

gation offered only a federal system, with more power remaining in the capital.

The talks officially concerned only relations between the junta and the SPLA.

The Khartoum delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha and the SPLA delegation by its second-in-command, Salva Kiir.

Fighting in southern Sudan had dogged the talks.

Friday, the Sudanese army said it had killed most of an SPLA rebel force which attacked a military post near the town of Torit on Monday.

It said the rebels had been backed by soldiers from a neighbouring country — which it did not name — who were trying to thwart the Nairobi talks. Three foreign soldiers were killed in the fighting, it said.

Two rebel tanks were also captured, the army said, but did not give any figures of government losses.

Meanwhile, relief workers said the SPLA had surrounded Juba, the southern capital and the government's last main stronghold there, with the front line between about 30 and 70 kilometres from the city.

Food was getting to Juba only by barge up the White Nile and by air.

An unknown number of residents have fled towards Yei, 150 kilometres to the

southwest, which is held by the rebels.

The South Sudan Defence Force, a coalition of SPLA splinter-groups which allied with the government in April, claimed to have recently captured a number of locations in the southern state of Upper Nile.

Its deputy commander, Peter Paul Kong, had warned at the start of the Nairobi talks that SPLA commanders and men would defect if the rebels failed to show sincerity in the negotiations and continued their "procrastination."

The war has embittered regional relations, with Khartoum accusing Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda of supporting the rebels, charges all three countries deny.

Uganda accuses Sudan of backing Ugandan rebels.

The United States slapped an economic embargo on Sudan as a "terrorist state" Monday, prohibiting U.S. trade with Sudan and barring financial transactions.

The junta slammed the sanctions as "a form of the aggression and injustice the American administration practices against states which have independent attitudes and are unwilling to succumb to its tutelage."

The Arab League condemned them too, saying they would hurt the Sudanese people more than President Al Bashir's regime.



THE MERRY SEASON LAUNCHED AT HARRODS: Mohammad Fayed (on the left) is all smiles Saturday as he sets off the festive season with an elaborate Christmas street parade. The Harrods boss filled the air with fake snow outside his London store as he welcomed Father Christmas (AFP photo)

Netanyahu renews conditions for south Lebanon withdrawal

BEIRUT (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in remarks published on Saturday that Israel would immediately withdraw from south Lebanon if guerrilla groups there were dismantled and other conditions were met.

He was speaking in English in an interview with Middle East Television, run by Israel's local militia allies in the south, which was broadcast on Friday with Arabic translation and carried in Nida Al Watan newspaper on Saturday.

Mr. Netanyahu said the most important condition for a pullout was "the dismantling of terrorist organizations and a guarantee for the future of our allies."

The Israeli prime minister suggested that if his conditions were not met, the

Jewish state was prepared for a long-term presence in volatile south Lebanon.

"We will safeguard our presence in the border zone until God is willing," he stressed. "I consider that the situation is good and we are not passing through difficult times."

Hizbollah is fighting to drive Israeli forces and their local militia allies of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) from the Jewish state's self-declared "security" zone in south Lebanon.

Israel has suffered heavy losses in recent months, fuelling a debate at home over the continued presence of its soldiers in the self-declared zone.

Hizbollah has vowed to fight until the last drop of blood to drive Israeli troops and SLA militiamen from

south Lebanon, site of frequent roadside bombs, air raids, rocket attacks and fierce clashes.

Israel carved out the current self-declared south Lebanon buffer zone in 1985 with the declared aim of preventing guerrillas from launching cross-border attacks.

Hizbollah guerrillas have killed 39 Israeli soldiers this year — more than in any other single year since 1985 — prompting calls in Israel for a unilateral withdrawal.

Mr. Netanyahu repeated the official line that Israel was not prepared for a unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon.

He said that Israel "would not delay for one second" a withdrawal from south Lebanon if it secured "a dismantling of terrorist groups

— most notably Hizbollah — and... a guarantee for the future of our allies and their rights."

So far this year, south Lebanon fighting has also killed 18 SLA militiamen and 52 Lebanese guerrillas, mostly Hizbollah fighters.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai last month ruled out a unilateral withdrawal, saying such a move would endanger communities on Israel's northern border.

Lebanese leaders have rejected Mr. Netanyahu's offer to have Lebanon deploy troops in the south and disarm Hizbollah in exchange for an Israeli pullout, insisting Israel simultaneously withdraw from the Golan Heights occupied since the 1967 Mideast war.

Israeli left accuses government of exploiting Rabin conspiracies

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli opposition and intelligence services accused the ruling right Saturday of trying to "falsify" history by focusing on the alleged role of a secret service informer in the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Avisai Raviv, who worked as an informer for the Shin Bet intelligence service, became a new political football two years after the assassination when ministers accused him of having egged on right-wing extremists to commit violence instead of merely monitoring them.

The ministers in the government of right-wing Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are exploiting Raviv to "falsify history," opposition Labour

party head Ehud Barak said Saturday.

"They're touting Raviv as if he were the only one responsible. He is fingered as the instigator of every act of provocation" against Rabin, Mr. Barak told the radio.

Labour leader Barak accused Mr. Netanyahu — at the time head of the opposition — of having "approved" of the virulent anti-Rabin propaganda which the left has said created the atmosphere which drove a young Jewish extremist to gun down Rabin on Nov. 4, 1995.

"At the time I saw Likud members demonstrating with posters reading, 'Rabin is a traitor' and 'Death to Rabin'," he said. Questions over Raviv's role have intensified the finger-pointing which has wracked Israeli politics since Rabin's murder.

The left has often accused Mr. Netanyahu and the Likud of responsibility of creating the poisoned anti-Rabin climate, while the right-wing has accused the opposition of trying to stain it with the assassination.

Mr. Netanyahu said on Friday that the role of Raviv — who had the Shin Bet codename of "Champagne" — should be "clarified."

Former Shin Bet head Yaakov Peri retorted that Mr. Netanyahu's government was using Raviv to elude its responsibility in Rabin's assassination and pin the blame on the internal spy agency.

"This is no coincidence that this is coming up now. Members of the government and others in the right are trying to put the blame on Shin Bet," he said.

The Shin Bet head at the time of Rabin's killing, Carmi Guillon, admitted Friday that Raviv had been "a problematic agent."

Mr. Netanyahu's Science Minister Michael Eitan repeated charges Saturday that "Champagne" had been "the leader of a vast campaign of provocation."

Raviv "was not marginal. Israelis remember the posters showing Rabin in a Nazi S.S. uniform which Raviv distributed at a time when he worked for an agency of the state," he said.

"I am against 'wasta,'" he said during an interview with the Jordan Times. "I want to achieve equality and that's what I will work for."

"My slogans were that I'm honest and humble. I didn't promise miracles. I can't achieve that. I only asked for the public's confidence in my character. I follow basic and forthright principles, which means that I don't accept bribes and bargains."

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that this is coming up now. Members of the government and others in the right are trying to put the blame on Shin Bet," he said.

The Shin Bet head at the time of Rabin's killing, Carmi Guillon, admitted Friday that Raviv had been "a problematic agent."

Mr. Netanyahu's Science Minister Michael Eitan repeated charges Saturday that "Champagne" had been "the leader of a vast campaign of provocation."

Raviv "was not marginal. Israelis remember the posters showing Rabin in a Nazi S.S. uniform which Raviv distributed at a time when he worked for an agency of the state," he said.

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Batman still wears pyjamas every now and then

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Just to clear up any doubts, Adam West, the '60s cape-and-cowl icon who bedded Bad Guys as Batman, told reporters he and TV sidekick Robin were not playing a gay couple. But "people can imagine whatever they like" about the fictional relationship between the cohabiting crimefighters. West told a convention on comic books and science fiction here. These days, West said, he only suits up for Halloween. "And I have some Batman pyjamas I wear once in a while."

Rift between queen and Cherie over dress-code

LONDON (R) — In a land where men wear skirts, the wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair is under fire for ditching hers during a visit to Queen Elizabeth at her Scottish country retreat. Never mind that women in trousers is old news, even in the hidebound home of tartan. Or that Prince Charles regularly wears a kilt during trips to Scotland while the queen, one of the richest women in the world, is devoted to her headscarf. News that Britain's unofficial first lady opted for pants in the royal presence has raised eyebrows and even stirred talk of a chasm between the modernising new Labour government and the crusty old house of Windsor.

'Dear Tony' attends summit

LONDON (R) — It was not your typical diplomatic exchange. Despite a long history of Anglo-French amity and plenty of practice at summit pomposity, the leaders of France and Britain gushed in first-name terms on Friday as they faced the press after their closed-door talks. "Dear Tony," French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin began his introductory remarks in a tribute to British Prime Minister Tony Blair. French President Jacques Chirac also broke with summit formality, simply referring to Blair as "Tony" when he was given the floor. Not to be outdone, Blair joined in the show of goodwill, saying that he considered the French president just as much a friend as the Socialist premier.

Octopusi does job of shower, jacuzzi, stambath

BRUSSELS (R) — A horizontal shower, an electric walking stick, a disposable dog toilet and a detector for wet nappies are a few of the weird and wonderful items on show at Brussels 46th Annual Inventors Fair. The star of the show is the horizontal shower, the octopusi, a cross between a jacuzzi, a shower and a stambath, invented by Juan-Gabriel Antuna. The subject lies face down in a box resembling the type used by a magician to saw people in half, but with only the head sticking out at one end. The lid closes and a battery of 36 nozzles sends jets of high pressure warm water at waves up and down the body for eight minutes.

Scorsese prepares a movie biography of Dean Martin

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Director Martin Scorsese is hoping that Tom Hanks will play the late actor, singer and all-American bon vivant Dean Martin in a bio-pic, the Daily Variety trade journal reported. Dean Martin was one of the shortest to Martin's best friends Sinatra and Peter Lawlor. Variety said, "Carrey would play Lewis in the 1950s."

Palestinian prisoners vow hunger strike along with woman prisoner

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Nearly 900 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel threatened Saturday to launch a hunger strike in support of a woman prisoner who has refused food for 18 days, a human rights worker said.

Issa Qaraqeh, the head of the Palestinian rights group, Prisoners' Club, in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, told Agence France Presse (AFP) he had received a letter from the prisoners vowing to launch an "open-ended hunger strike."

"The letter, representing all the administrative detainees held by Israel, said they would start an open-ended hunger strike

when the hunger strike by Itaf Ayyan reaches its 20th day," Mr. Qaraqeh said.

Israel holds around 880 Palestinians in "administrative detention," a policy of open-ended detention without charge or trial, according to Prisoners' Club figures.

Ayyan, a member of Islamic Jihad, has been on hunger strike since her arrest on Oct. 21 and was moved to a prison hospital on Friday.

Islamic Jihad issued a statement Saturday calling on "all Palestinian political forces and international human rights groups to press for the release of our Mujahid [holy warrior]

Ayyan."

"We warn the Zionists that they will never enjoy security as long as they continue to rob us of our rights and freedoms. Israel is driving the region to a new explosion with its policies," said the statement, received by AFP.

Ayyan, who had been released after nine years of prison to a general release of 30 women prisoners by Israel in February, was arrested amid a crackdown against Islamists launched by the army in August.

Most of the Palestinians currently under administrative detention were picked up in the same crackdown.

Fighting escalates between Kurd factions in north Iraq

ANKARA (AP) — More than 50 guerrillas have been killed in the past two days of fighting between rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq, an Iraqi-Kurdish group said Friday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said that fighters of the rival patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) launched nine attacks Wednesday and Thursday on its positions near the town of Degalah, 40 kilometres east of main Kurdish city Erbil.

The PUK attacked in collaboration with the Turkish-Kurd rebels of the Kurdish

Labour Party (PKK), the KDP said in a statement.

The KDP said its guerrillas repulsed the attacks, killing a total of 45 PUK and PKK combatants.

Fourteen KDP guerrillas were killed and 28 wounded, the KDP statement admitted.

The PUK and KDP, who have uneasily shared control of the Kurdish autonomous zone in northern Iraq since 1991, resumed fighting in October after observing a U.S.-brokered ceasefire for 12 months.

PUK and PKK rebels

formed an alliance earlier this year when the KDP began supporting Turkish forces in cross-border operations against the separatist PKK guerrillas, who have bases in north Iraq.

In Washington, a PUK spokesman dismissed the KDP report as "exaggerated" and described the latest fighting as regular skirmishes.

"We believe that this is happening to cover the deployment of Turkish tanks," Barham Saleh, told the Associated Press bureau in Cairo by telephone.

Souf camp gets its 'own' man to Lower House of Parliament

"We saw, this year, a chance for the first time to 'create' our own candidate, and we did," explains a resident. "He's one in the house, but he will be all of our voices."

Mr. Othman, an independent candidate who made an unsuccessful bid for the House in 1993, won Jerash's first seat, with 4,355 votes, ahead of incumbent candidate Mufleh Ruheimi, assumed to be one of the National Constitutional Party's "stealth candidates," who secured 4,191. Together, they amassed roughly 25 per cent of the ballots cast in the district last Tuesday.

Mr. Ruheimi's return to the Lower House wasn't much of a surprise as he was believed to be favoured by the influential Bani Hassan tribe among the seven candidates they fielded. But Mr. Othman's victory was less certain and depended on the suc-

cess or failure of further tribal alignment in the district, which proved to be disunited.

It was also aided, camp residents say, by the boycott of the IAF which in 1993 fielded a candidate who was both an IAF member and a tribal figure.

"We can say that we learned a lesson from the Islamists," a resident told the Jordan Times. "They know the meaning of 'strength in numbers'. If the camp wants a voice, it must act as one body. We also learned something from [the IAF] about organising the vote. They relied heavily on the women's vote in 1993, and that was important in the camp this year."

Souf residents claim that they are more than half of Mr. Othman's voters, and among their 2,500 votes cast, women's votes were more than one-third of the camp's vote.

Their expectations of Mr. Othman, they say, are simple: create employment by both developing infrastructure in the camp and offering incentives to attract small businesses and industries.

A dingy cafe, at the end of the bus line running from Jerash proper to Souf, was full and lively last Thursday afternoon, but, says the owner, this isn't a weekend crowd; a full house can be found here any day of the week. It's the only way to pass the time, he says.

"We have no work," says Maher, a patron, on behalf of the congregation. "Those who do work don't make a living and usually, can only find temporary jobs, outside of Jerash. By the time people spend money on transportation, there is nothing left to feed families or pay bills."

Jobs, in fact, ranked higher on Souf's agenda than the rapidly collapsing peace process,

although most of Souf's residents are Palestinian refugees twice over: from 1948 and 1967.

"We know that [Othman] is not a miracle worker, and anyway, who consults the Parliament about this issue?" asks an elderly man. "I'm not relying on Riad Othman to secure my rights in Palestine — the U.S. can't do it, why should I expect him to?"

Instead, says one, Souf residents would prefer that Mr. Othman concentrate his efforts on bringing them into the mainstream of life in Jordan.

"Some people here see us as foreigners, as infringing on their rights as Jordanians," he said, referring to the controversial issue of the Jordanian-Palestinian dichotomy. "We're here. We live here. We're part of this country and we are looking for a voice."

The newly elected deputy is

well-known in many of Jerash's civic organisations: he is the president of the local committee for the disabled in Jerash's Gaza Camp, a member of the Jerash Consultative Council, a member of the board of Queen Alia Fund, Jerash, a member of the board at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and a member of the board of the JUST Agricultural College.

He is also the head of the Higher Coordination Committee for the Handicapped in nine refugee camps.

He is active in the private sector and owns a transport company as well as agricultural land.

But where Souf has clearly identified an agenda for Mr. Othman's four-year parliamentary tenure, the deputy, born in Qalqilia in 1945, was non-committal regarding his programme, save that Jerash suffers underrepresentation in the Parliament,

which he will seek to rectify. But, as a self-described independent, was hesitant to ally himself with the cause of the Souf Camp.

"I am against 'wasta,'" he said during an interview with the Jordan Times. "I want to achieve equality and that's what I will work for."

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By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

SOUF REFUGEE CAMP — Fifty-five thousand votes, 22 candidates and two parliamentary seats should make for stiff competition in any electoral district.

But the absence of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and a disunited tribal vote abetted the Souf Refugee Camp in placing "their" man, Riad Da'oud Othman, in the Lower House, and for the first time, camp residents believe, they will have a voice, however, small, in the Parliament.